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`If it's not black gold, then it's bone gold'

Contested knowledges of the Prestwich Street dead

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University of Cape Town

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requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy**

17 February 2008

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Centre for African Studies
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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

Between June 2003 and February 2005 thousands of human skeletal remains were exhumed from their place of interment on a construction site near Prestwich Street in Green Point, Cape Town. The remains and the site became the subject of heated debate between various individuals and collectivities — a property developer, heritage managers, activists, lobbyists, and certain archaeologists and scientists — whose ways of knowing the dead differed markedly. The aim of this mini-dissertation is to map out the nature of these contested knowledges of the Prestwich Street dead, and to describe and analyse the struggles of dominance and resistance these different ways of knowing gave rise to. My argument throughout is that out of the clashing of these knowledges emerged a frontier — a discursive space of conflict and turbulence that came into being with the surfacing of the dead, and dissipated with an official decision to prevent basic anatomical research on their skeletal remains. If this discursive battle and this frontier opened up the post-apartheid public sphere to new and emergent (South) African identities, then it also closed down the public sphere with the further entrenchment of particular disciplinary identities and formations, namely archaeology, physical anthropology, development, and heritage resources management. The challenge for a Prestwich memorial site, I assert, will thus lie in finding ways to allow for the fuller emergence and articulation of these new South African and African identities, as well as in finding ways to contest and challenge current disciplinary guiding ideas and modes of practice.

Acknowledgements

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Preface



Figure 1 Photograph of Marion Walgate's statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town, 2006 (source: Gerard Ralphs, personal archive).

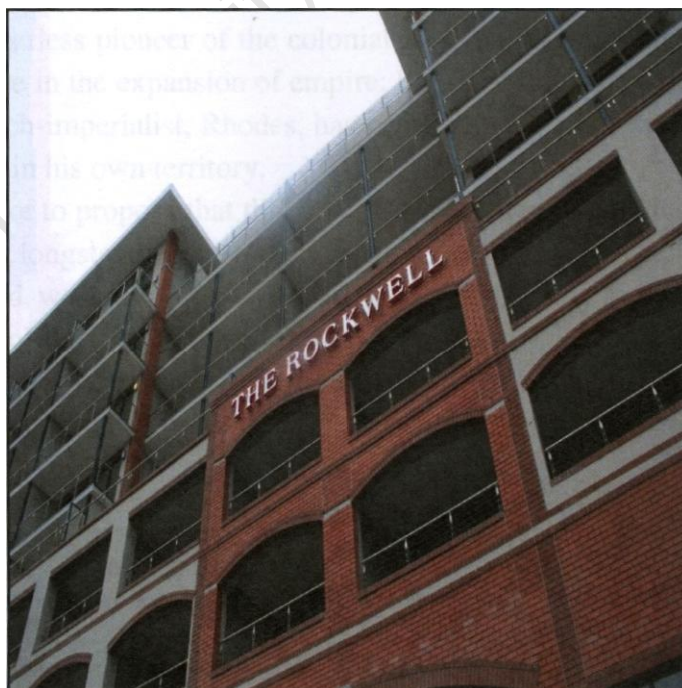


Figure 2 Photograph of The Rockwell near Somerset Road, Green Point, Cape Town, 2007 (source: Gerard Ralphs, personal archive).

The first photograph we see on page one was taken on a walk to the University of Cape Town's (UCT) upper campus early one morning towards the end of 2006. In this image, one which I find to be both amusing and extraordinary, we encounter a low-angle photograph of Marion Walgate's statue of arch-imperialist, Cecil John Rhodes (1853-1902), which was unveiled at UCT in 1934. In terms of the university's local geography, the statue lies at the foot of the Jameson Stairs, in a direct line-of-sight that leads the eye from the start of the Japonica Walk on middle campus, past the Summer House, to the entrance of the Jameson Hall, and then further up, to the tip of Devil's Peak (to the side of Rhodes' right ankle) It is this axis upon which UCT, the so-called 'Oxford or Cambridge of South Africa' (Phillips 1993, p. 127), was designed and built.

What we do not see in the photograph, as it is framed, is that Walgate's statue positions Rhodes projecting his masculine gaze outwards over the university's rugby fields and, symbolically, in the direction of Africa's northern interior. Of course, we must not forget that it was Rhodes who endowed the land — his Groote Schuur estate — upon which UCT itself was constructed.¹ It is of little wonder, therefore, that a memorial to Rhodes is positioned strategically at the very "centre" of the imperial universe he sought to construct and sustain at Africa's southern tip.²

The real points of interest in this image, though, are those objects that have been superimposed onto Walgate's statue. On the face of Rhodes a gasmask partially covers his mouth and nose; we also see a wooden cage — a kind of make-shift prison — which encloses his stone body within its interior. The overall hilarity of this image of Rhodes is at once striking. In my reading of the photograph, the addition of these appendages to the statue reduces the once powerful Rhodes to a choking prisoner. No longer is he a fearless pioneer of the colonial worlds ('Your hinterland lies yonder'), an eminent figure in the expansion of empire; but rather, a man of little or no status or position. The arch-imperialist, Rhodes, has been caged up, as it were, like a prisoner-of-war captured in his own territory.

I would like to propose that this image — as the fleeting product of but a slice of time — inverts a longstanding historical relationship through its representation of the vulnerability and weakness of the imperialist.³ Its moment marks the (metaphoric) shifting of the colonial to the post-colonial — a moment where the colonist is deemed to be no longer a source of tyranny and oppression; but, instead, a source of amusement and laughter. I think that through a contemporary viewing of this image

1 For more detail of this history, see Phillips (1993), 'Building the promised land: the construction of the Groote Schuur campus, 1916-1929', pp. 145-160. Part of the imperial project that developed around the UCT landscape was the construction of a zoo. For an exploratory discussion of this site, see Shepherd and Reybrouck (2002).

2 There are other statues and monuments commemorating the life of Cecil John Rhodes. These include the well-known Rhodes Memorial situated on the campus of the University of Cape Town. For an exploration of this topography see Gibson (2006). See also Ranger (1999).

3 For a detailed explication of the ways in which colonial photography has functioned in Africa, see Hartmann and others (2001).

we are fortunate enough to be able to chuckle along at Rhodes' inevitable fall from grace.⁴

As an object of heritage that takes us back to South Africa's colonial era where the development and entrenchment of South Africa's racial order begins, the statue of Rhodes, alongside his multiple legacies, begs a number of ethical questions in a post-apartheid South African context.⁵ What is the literal and figurative place of Rhodes on the contemporary and historical maps of the city of Cape Town? Or of Zimbabwe, where his remains rest? How ought we to know and remember Rhodes — historically-speaking, institutionally-speaking, and ethically-speaking? Ought we, as I am sure many would wish, demolish his statue(s), and make way for statues of the heroes of Africa's liberation struggles? Or do we continue to live alongside Rhodes and his legacies, ignorant or apathetic towards his spectral yet very real presence in our lives?⁶

In the second photograph on page six, one of Green Point's newly constructed buildings, The Rockwell, also stands defiantly on the post-apartheid landscape as a signifier of an era in South Africa's history driven (to an arguably greater or lesser degree) by the impulses of economic and cultural globalisation. From The Rockwell's design and architecture based on the New York Jazz Age of the 1920s, to its location in the centre of one of Cape Town's most rapidly gentrifying urban suburbs, this new structure is tangible evidence of how the vicissitudes of a global present have begun to occupy local space-time. Thus, as much as the statue of Rhodes and The Rockwell building may at first glance appear unrelated, they are unified insofar as they represent an entrepreneurial desire — rooted in capitalist modes of production and consumption, and particular conceptions of knowledge, class, and status — to control and to shape the landscape. In this distinctive sense these structures are more similar than different in what they tell us about Africa's past, present and future; and, in this way, they are heterotopias *par excellence* (Foucault 1986). But these heterotopic 'sites' (ibid, p. 238) are also sites of memory, from the past in the present.

Philosopher of history, Pierre Nora (1989, p. 12) writes that *lieux de memoire* (sites of memory) can be likened to 'moments of history' that are 'torn away from the movement of history, then returned; no longer quite life, not yet death, like shells on

4 I understand Rhodes' fall from grace to be inevitable precisely because of the inherent contradictions of the colonial project, the most powerful of which was the desire for ownership of the human.

5 A recent work by a Rhodes University scholar has re-convened the debate around the historical figure of Rhodes and his multiple legacies. See Maylam (2005). For a useful discussion on the meanings of settler monuments in post-apartheid South Africa, see Bunn (1998).

6 There are two popular cases where the name of Nelson Mandela and that of Cecil John Rhodes have been paired. These are the Mandela Rhodes Foundation and Mandela Rhodes Place, an upmarket residential development in Cape Town's inner city. At the heart of the ethos of the Mandela Rhodes Foundation, its website explains, is a drawing together of 'the legacy of leadership and reconciliation embodied by Nelson Mandela with Cecil John Rhodes' legacy of entrepreneurship and education'. See the official website of the Mandela Rhodes Foundation (2008).

the shore when the sea of living memory has receded.' If, at least poetically-speaking, the forces of colonialism in Africa appear to have beached in the momentary re-invention of the statue of Rhodes, and the ending of apartheid more generally, then the uncovering of an unmarked graveyard from Cape Town's colonial period on the construction site of The Rockwell, and indeed the recently publicised knowledge of the presence of a slave burial ground on the UCT middle campus, are two powerful signs that the excesses of the past have washed up on the shores of the present to challenge us. The question beckons: What is the meaning and the value of the unnamed dead in a (South) African present?

University of Cape Town

List of abbreviations

ANC — African National Congress
ACO — Archaeology Contracts Office
ASAPA — Association of South African Professional Archaeologists
BP — British Petroleum
CAS — Centre for African Studies
CEO — Chief Executive Officer
CT — Cape Town
CCT — City of Cape Town
CMC — Cape Metropolitan Council
CSRFB — Cultural Sites and Resources Forum
CRM — Cultural Resources Management
DAC — Department of Arts and Culture
D6M — District Six Museum
DRC — Dutch Reformed Church
HOPSAHC — Hands Off Prestwich Street Burial Ground Ad Hoc Committee
HRS — Heritage Resources Section (of the City of Cape Town)
HWC — Heritage Western Cape
MAD — Manuscripts and Archives Division of the University of Cape Town Libraries
NHRA — National Heritage Resources Act (no. 25 of 1999)
PCP — Public Consultation Process
PPPC — Prestwich Place Project Committee
PPRP — Prestwich Place Redevelopment Project
SAHRA — South African Heritage Resources Agency
SAPS — South African Police Service
SANPAD — South African Netherlands Programme for Alternatives in Development
SPRG — Special Focus Reference Group
TAC — Treatment Action Campaign
UCT — University of Cape Town
UCU — Urban Conservation Unit
UNISA — University of South Africa
UWC — University of Western Cape
WAC — World Archaeological Congress

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Figure 1 Photograph of the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town.

Figure 2 Photograph of The Rockwell, Green Point, Cape Town.

Figure 3 Archaeologists representing the ACO performing exhumation work on site near Prestwich Street.

Figure 4 Caricature of Alan Morris by cartoonist, Grogan.

Figure 5 Photograph of Prestwich Primary School.

University of Cape Town

Graves left unattended, digging up graves, can never bode well for anybody, because graves, skeletons, are not just physical pieces of historical, physical, evidential material; they are actually the last remains of the spirits of those that dwell within them. Must put those spirits to rest and let them rest.

Zenzile Khoisan (2005)

I never quite understood the concept of putting the people back in their graves. You know they going to benefit absolutely nobody... Unless you exhume the bodies and do proper research on them you actually learning nothing. It's a completely fruitless exercise... When you have an emotional group of people that are certainly not representative of the greater community, and when you have such a small minority of people who are actually appealing on an emotional level as opposed to a reasonable level or a scientific level, I find that very strange.. .I tend to think this whole thing spiralled totally out of control.

Michael Philippides (2005)

The moment when the travel-writer condemns the Hottentot for doing nothing marks the moment when the Hottentot brings him face to face (if he will only recognize it) with the limits of his own preconceptions.

JM Coetzee, *White writing* (1988, p. 25)

Introduction

Key events: 16 May 2003 to 21 September 2005

In mid-May 2003, work on the site of a multi-million rand development in Green Point, Cape Town — formerly called the Prestwich Place Redevelopment Project (PPRP), now, The Rockwell — was unexpectedly interrupted when human skeletal remains were uncovered by site personnel. The development team notified the relevant authorities in terms of the newly passed National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) of 1999, and work on site was discontinued. Archaeological contractors from the Archaeological Contracts Office (ACO) based at the University of Cape Town were brought in to assess the site, following which a decision was taken by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) to grant a permit for a rescue exhumation of the exposed remains. Exhumation work, which was paid for by the developer in terms of the NHRA, began early in June.

A local Cape Town heritage consultancy, the Cultural Sites and Resources Forum (CSRF), were also contracted by the developer, to conduct the statutory public notification and consultation process. Three public meetings were held as part of this process, and a range of public responses were recorded by the CSRF as a result of extensive multi-media advertising. Following a negative public reaction to the exhumations at the first public meeting, work on site was ordered to a halt by SAHRA. Two more public meetings were held subsequently, after which an official decision was taken by SAHRA to recommence the exhumations. In reaction to this decision, the Hands Off Prestwich Street Burial Ground Ad Hoc Committee (HOPSAHC) (hereinafter the Hands Off Committee) was formed. A first appeal was lodged by the Hands Off Committee with SAHRA to contest the continued exhumations, which was duly rejected in favour of its Permit Committee's prior actions. A further notice to appeal was lodged by the Hand Off Committee (in 2004, newly constituted as the Prestwich Place Project Committee (PPPC)) at the end of 2003 to an independent tribunal convened by the Minister of Arts and Culture, which was also rejected. Exhumations on site continued throughout 2004, and were completed in 2005.

In the same year, two requests to study the exhumed human remains were lodged by one master's and two doctoral candidates from UCT. Consideration was given to these requests by SAHRA and a range of special interest groups, including the PPPC. On 21 September, an official decision was taken by SAHRA CEO, Phakamani Buthelezi, prohibiting any scientific research of the bones of the dead.

Black gold, bone gold

The dramatic surfacing of the dead sparked a protracted battle — 'a passionately fought campaign' (Shepherd 2006a, p. 129) — between different individuals and collectivities: the property developer and his development team, archaeologists, physical anthropologists, activists, scholars, legal representatives, heritage managers and practitioners, and others. With the residue of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) public processes still precipitate in the national political imagination, the battles over the bones of the Prestwich Street dead and the site of their interment must too be seen as one of the significant battles over knowledge of the past in the post-apartheid public sphere. Where some defended development at all costs and at all times, and in doing so advocated the right of the developer to realise the value of his investment, others fought vehemently for the right of the dead to return unhindered, 'in their own time and on their terms' (Grunebaum 2007, p. 210). Where some fought for the exhumation of the dead, and the right of scientists to unlock the "secret histories" of the bones, others understood the bones of the dead to mean something quite other to the dominant understanding of skeletal remains in the disciplines of archaeology and physical anthropology — a bone specimens, artefacts — and fought for the gravesites themselves to be thought of as the 'primary' memorials (Thulani 2003).

In fact, despite the efforts of local and national heritage managers to reach a consensus with all 'interested parties' (Grunebaum 2007, p. 212) vis-à-vis 'reasonable' solutions (Emsten 2006, p. 91), the arrival of the bones of the dead in the stormy Cape winter of 2003 remains a disquieting moment in Cape Town's urban memory (Crimson 2005, xii); and their spectral presence in the public sphere since 2003 has opened up a set of questions about the city's past and present that remain, to a very great extent, unanswered. How do we remember and commemorate the lives of the Cape underclasses who themselves contributed to the development of the city, the nation? If the underclasses, historically, were deemed unworthy of citizenship and a sense of belonging in a harsh society, then what does it mean, now, in our not entirely dissimilar post-apartheid context, for notions of citizenship and belonging, but also notions of class, culture, and identity? Who has the power to speak for, write about, and imagine the lives of the unnamed dead? And what do these (deeply ;discursive) acts of speaking, writing, imagining entail for the interlocutors of the city's past and present, for the underclasses themselves?

'If it's not black gold, then it's bone gold' may seem an extraordinary title for a mini-dissertation. The phrase itself was selected from an oral interview I conducted with Zenzile Khoisan in 2005,⁷ and is extraordinary, I think, because of the precision of its images and allusions as relate to the events that transpired around the Prestwich Street burial ground, and the three attendant relationships between: global capitalism vis-a-vis oil (black gold), in the first place; the global economic forces at play in the

⁷ The full transcript of the interview is attached to this minidissertation as Appendix A.

development of The Rockwell, as well as in the operations of the British Petroleum (BP) filling station nearby, in the second place; and the scientific will and desire to reap the riches of the bones (bone gold), in the third. Gold as an organising metaphor in this statement also reverberates onomatopoeically with the clash and clang of Johannesburg's historical shovel, as well as images of the triple exploitation of the migrant worker himself, his community and his loved ones, and the treasures of the 'world below' (Shepherd & Ernsten 2007, p. 215). Black gold, bone gold: an intimate link not at all indistinguishable in the context of South Africa's tempestuous past and present.

Yet Zenzile Khoisan, who was one of the most radical critics of the Prestwich Street exhumations, and a journalist who followed and documented proceedings closely, spoke angrily and eloquently during our interview (and indeed likewise in a number of public forums), of the 'archi-violence' of the exhumations (Sato 2006, p. 3, in Shepherd 2007a, p. 21 and Ernsten 2006, p. 85), and of the need to 'put those spirits to rest' out of respect for their living descendents, *and* out of respect for the spirits of the dead themselves. My short, yet provocative, encounter with him immediately alerted me to the divergent ways in which the dead were thought of and known by those involved in contesting their futures, their fate, in the public sphere. On the one hand, in Zenzile Khoisan's discourse, a sliver of which I cite in my first epigraph (page seven), the bones of the Prestwich Street dead are understood to be the 'last remains of the spirits of those that dwell within them' and the 'ancestors' of the people of Cape Town.

Those bones are not disconnected from the progeny that is left here in their wake. We [Capetonians] are the progeny of those bones. We are the living manifestation of the people who brought us here, who purveyed us here. We are the descendents of those bones, of those ancestors (Khoisan 2005).

The bones, according to Zenzile Khoisan, are not 'physical pieces of historical, physical, evidential material', which was the image of the remains of the dead a competing scientific discourse instantiated during and after the exhumations; nor were the bones, in his way of seeing and knowing the dead, simply heritage resources to be protected as part of the national estate, boxed and labeled as they were in a disused mortuary at the Woodstock Day Hospital. The (very) contested space, where these rival discourses or ways of seeing and knowing the dead, bump up against each other — what I want to describe centrally as a *frontier* — is precisely the complex discursive territory this mini-dissertation undertakes to map out and to traverse.

Old frontiers, new frontiers

frontier (noun) 1 a border separating two countries. 2 the furthest part of land that has been settled. 3 the limit of what is known in a particular area (OED 2002, p. 282).

The notion of the frontier is invoked widely in past and present historical studies of South Africa to describe the movement of the colonial powers and settlers into the country's interior, their position in relation to the local or global imperial metropole, as well as the kinds of interactions and resistances that opposed this movement by southern Africa's pre-colonial human population groups (Walker 1930; Kemp 1932; Saunders & Derricourt 1974; Elphick & Gilomee 1979; Lamar & Thompson 1981; Mostert 1992; Penn 2005).⁸ The notion of the frontier, as it is used predominantly in studies of the South African past, is an altogether powerful trope signifying a number of interrelated elements of the colonial world: the edge of the colony or settlement; a liminal zone of contact and contestation with the so-called other; a border and a borderland that separates, or integrates, the life and times of the civilised from the 'nothingness' (Mbembe 2001, p. 2), the bestiality, of the so-called African native. In the words of former UCT historian, Eric Walker, writing in the early twentieth century, the frontier tradition in South African historiography 'is a tradition that plays its part wherever advanced and backward races come into contact with each other' —

For the British settlers in the Eastern Province of the Cape Colony and in Natal, to go no farther afield, soon learnt the rules of the game that all men of Western civilisation have played. ..in touch with tribal natives whose land and labour are desirable (Walker 1930 p. 5, 13, 24, quoted in Legassick 1980, p. 46).

Defined in this way — in evolutionary terms, in terms of the clash of Western civilisation with the Other, in terms of traffic between colonist and native — the trope of the frontier has consistently structured the South African historiographical consciousness as a meta-metaphor for a colonial modernity, itself based on racialised knowledges and essentialised notions of sameness and difference.

Defined in this way the trope of the frontier is subject to a crude nativism, a paradigm of thought and praxis Achille Mbembe so trenchantly attacks in his landmark texts *On the postcolony* (2001) and 'African Modes of Self-Writing' (2002a). A nativist project to recover any essential African identities is 'doomed' Mbembe prophesies, because 'the time we live in is fundamentally fractured.' Thus: 'Only the disparate, and often intersecting, practices through which Africans *stylize* their conduct and life can account for the thickness of which the African present is made' (Mbembe 2001, p. 273; original emphasis). While keeping in mind the resonances of Mbembe's theorisations viz. nativism and comprehending the 'African present' (I return to Mbembe's work in chapter one), I understand that the notion of the frontier, understood in more general terms, is not totally devoid of meaning or lacking in explanatory power. Thus, I would like to explicate a different definition and interpretation of the frontier, a new hermeneutics, as it were, while attempting to retain two of its valences that define the frontier as a site of battle or clash, on the one hand, and as a space of convergence, divergence or even emergence, on the other.

⁸ See Legassick (1980) on the frontier tradition in South African historiography.

The frontier, then, in my own reading, is not a geographical region at all. Instead, it is a figurative region, first and foremost, characterised by a series of 'struggles over meaning' (Robins 2005a, p. 7) in the context of uneven power relations.⁹ There are multiple frontiers that arise and that dissipate, that are contested and that give way, in the everyday of today and, indeed, in the everyday of the past.

For example, in the context of the early colonial history of the Cape, cattle figure as the 'object' of a complex, and deeply contradictory, frontier structuring a series of violent and deceptive exchanges between the Cape's pre-colonial inhabitants (the Cape Khoikhoi, among others), the employees of the VOC and, later, the *trekboers* (Penn 1989, pp. 4-9 & pp. 13-19). Where cattle occupied a distinctive and particular place in the lifestyles, imaginaries, and 'value scale' (Elphick 1977, p. 60) of the Khoikhoi — as a source of milk and butter, as a signifier of wealth — cattle were instrumental, in another (not entirely different) scale of value, in buffering both the broader mercantilist project of the VOC (Burrows and Wallace 1999, pp. 14-27), and the development of a VOC settlement at the Cape. The different meanings and values placed upon cattle gave rise to a frontier characterised — physically, literally — by a series of tangible battles over cattle, but which was, figuratively-speaking, a series of conceptual and discursive battles over the meaning and value of the same thing.

What I would like to demonstrate in this mini-dissertation follows more-or-less directly from this example rooted in South Africa's early colonial history: that what we encounter in the Prestwich Street archive (chapter one) is evidence of the presence of a similar kind of frontier. The bones of the dead, in this case, figure as the object that forms the scale and parameters of the frontier, the sides around which lie a number of distinctive discourses or languages for signifying and demonstrating the meaning and value, the significance, of the remains of the dead, and, indeed, the dead themselves as once living human beings.¹⁰

Understood in this light, it is possible to gesture tentatively that the central reason underlying the contested nature of the Prestwich Street dead and the site of their interment is, in fact, deceptively simple: that the dead have come to mean different things and to be valued in different ways by different individuals and collectivities. What, therefore, in this very particular set of contexts, did it mean to see and know the same thing differently?

As I shall reveal over the course of this essay, for some the bones represented valuable research opportunities, and a chance to expose their "hidden histories". In

9. In his introduction to an anthology of essays entitled *Limits to liberation after apartheid* (2005, p. 2, 7), Steven Robins argues that 'the solutions to many problems facing post-apartheid social transformation do not lie in an abstract realm of constitutional law or political philosophy but rather in specific, concrete realities and everyday struggles, negotiations and pragmatic compromises.' Furthermore, 'mainstream multicultural theories and political science and policy thinking are an inadequate lens for ... perpetually mutating socio-cultural and political processes', and 'cannot be understood through the language of theoretical abstraction and political philosophy, but need to be situated within specific historical contingencies and struggles over meaning.'

10 I am grateful to Anthony Bogues for bringing to my attention the deceptively obvious, yet important reciprocity between notions of meaning and value.

this way, their value lay primarily within the domains of scientific knowledge generation. While for others, the Prestwich Street dead are profoundly symbolic of the deep histories of racial slavery, colonialism, and the recent history of apartheid, and therefore possess a spiritual, emotional and even a psychological value. Yet for others still, the bones of the dead once lay squarely in the way of urban redevelopment, and figured as an aggravating obstacle, a "problem", impeding the way of profit-maximisation. In this case, the value of the bones was literally counted in time-cost ratios, development delays, and investor sentiment; the kinds of valuation methodologies which are of course rooted in a capitalist meta-narratives of loss and gain. While for those involved in the statutory heritage management of the remains of the dead, the bones were valued in terms of their potential as heritage resources, and their ability as heritage to give shape to the new nation.

I have undoubtedly constructed a simplified, almost schematic, picture of a complex reality. Nonetheless, I would like to assert at the outset, and to demonstrate in the body of this mini-dissertation, that the struggles over the dead are in fact struggles of value and of meaning and, in particular, struggles between different ways of seeing and knowing the city's colonial, apartheid, and contemporary pasts and presents. If this is indeed the case, then the two central questions from which I would like to depart in this introduction are: first, *what is the particular discursive quality of these struggles?* and, second, *how have these struggles given shape to the post-apartheid public sphere?*

Chapter outlines

Chapter one ('Theoretical and methodological points of departure') lines up the theoretical and methodological frames of reference for this mini-dissertation as a whole. On the side of theory I briefly discuss three organising themes for this research — 'the African postcolony in a globalising world', 'the post-apartheid city of Cape Town', and 'the public sphere' — with reference to recent scholarship on each theme. On the side of methodology I explore a critical discourse analysis as a methodological tool shaping my close-reading of the Prestwich Street archive. In particular, I show how a critical discourse analysis figures as a useful and productive research methodology for revealing the different ways of knowing the dead that emerged at Prestwich Street; for exposing the forms of identity performed in and through these discourses; as well as for locating the forms of power, embodied in practices of erasure, silencing, and exclusion, that these ways of knowing gave rise to.

Any research on Prestwich Street would be incomplete without recourse to the growing stock of work of a number of writers and commentators, who have grappled in various ways with the Prestwich Street archive. Thus, chapter two (CA literature review) explores both formally and informally published accounts of the Prestwich Street contestations, not only as a way of recognising this work, but also, as a way of clearing the space for my own intervention in the form of this mini-dissertation.

Chapter two is divided into three sections. The first section reviews works from what I call 'A critical inter-disciplinary literature' on Prestwich Street. The second body of literature, considerably less rich than the first, I describe in the second section as 'An instrumentalist literature' on Prestwich Street. I consider the position and placement of this mini-dissertation in relation to these bodies of work in the final section of this chapter.

In a series of four successive chapters (chapters three, four, five and six) I engage with the discourses of four distinctive, overlapping, discursive formations: the discourse of development (chapter three), an archaeological and a scientific discourse (chapter four), a discourse of heritage resources management (chapter five), and a public heritage counter-discourse (chapter six). Each of these chapters is divided into three sections. With the exception of chapter four, the first section of each chapter ('Context') briefly pinpoints the discourse under observation in the historical context of the exhumations and the public processes that followed in their wake. The second section of each chapter ('Analysis') critically analyses some of the statements and utterances characteristic of each discourse. While the third section ('Discussion') discusses these discourses in relation to bodies of literature specific to their broader discursive formation. In chapter four I combine context and analysis under one heading, followed by an integrated discussion of both the language of archaeology and the language of science. I present the argument of chapter four in the third section of the chapter.

I conclude this mini-dissertation by sketching the contours of the frontier, as I understand its formation and development to have occurred in the context of the Prestwich Street contestations. Specifically, I address my first central question by summarising the quality of each discourse in terms of the guiding notion of the frontier. I also address my second central question by exploring how the struggles over the bones of the dead and the site of their interment have given shape to the post-apartheid public sphere. My final remarks concern some of the particular philosophical or methodological challenges that await the Prestwich memorial project, as well as some more general remarks about Cape Town's slave and underclass histories and their meanings in a contemporary context.

In terms of a time-frame, the period that I am principally, although not exclusively, concerned with in this mini-dissertation is the period from 16 May 2003, the day the first bones were unearthed, to 21 September 2005, the day of the decision whereby it was officially declared that SAHRA would 'not approve basic anatomical research of the human remains exhumed from the Prestwich Place site' (SAHRA 2005a, p. 2). The significance of this particular period is that it is the period during which the debate around the futures of the burial site and its remains was open to its various contributors. The SAHRA decision, which closed the debate officially, also marks the closing of the frontier and the partial triumph of a particular way of seeing and knowing the dead.

Post-apartheid frontier studies

The surfacing of the Prestwich Street dead, and the struggles that accompanied their uncovering, comes at a moment in South Africa's transitional history when struggles across a range of frontiers — one of the most difficult and complex being the struggle over the different ways of knowing the HIV /Aids pandemic and its vicissitudes — are raging in the post-apartheid public sphere (Nattrass 2004, 2007; Cameron, 2005). The proliferation and multiplication of these frontiers is not only a positive sign of a vibrant and a deepening democracy (Appadurai 2002, p. 24; Robins 2003, 2005b), characterised by increased citizen action and involvement in respect of which the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) is exemplary. But also, they demonstrate the uneven and disparate relations of knowledge and power operating in the different public and private domains of post-apartheid society. The particular example of the manifestation of the HIV/ Aids pandemic in South Africa, and the competing responses from various corners of the South African state and its publics, would be an entirely relevant case study for a new kind of post-apartheid frontier studies.

This vast, and ever-expanding, domain of knowledge-power relations, and the multiple frontiers that may be seen to operate inside of this domain, are important signifiers of the nature and formation of post-apartheid (South) African identities, and provide a rich field of implication against which we are able to visibly see, and also read, a sense of newness developing out of the post-colonial moment. It is in this sense that I offer this mini-dissertation as a contribution to opening up the public sphere: to its many voices, its many points of view, its politics, its novel-ness, and ultimately to its multiplicity. As Ernsten (2006, p. 64) has remarked of the subject of this mini-dissertation, 'the surfacing of the [Prestwich Street] human remains [is] an opportunity to come to understand the discrepancies on which the city [of Cape Town] is built and the discursive formations which give shape to its futures'.

In my third epigraph, I cite South African author, JM Coetzee, who writes of the relationship between travel writers and the "Hottentots" at the Cape during the period of southern Africa's first wave of colonisation. Coetzee's insight, sharp as they so typically are, cuts to the heart of the central theme of this dissertation — that of conceptual dissonance and the limits of different conceptual frameworks for knowing the same "thing" (in Coetzee's case, idleness). The "Hottentot", in Coetzee's example, is the historical agent who brings the travel-writer to a deeper understanding of himself, indeed, if he will only recognise it, through practicing her way of knowing, seeing and being in the world, as different or as similar as these ways may be to the ways of the travel-writer himself. The dissonance, the sense of confusion or discord, that arises when the travel-writer faces the limits of his conceptual framework, precisely because of the presence of another, the "Hottentot", in the world, is the space that forces the colonial gaze upon itself, the consequences of which may have been varied for the travel-writer and the "Hottentot", but none-the-less brought each other to an (mis)understanding of the diverse ontological and epistemological natures of the human being in space-time.

If the "Hottentot", unwittingly and inadvertently, shows the travel-writer the boundary of her own way of knowing the world, through the very discourse of the travel-writer herself, then I think it is possible to identify similar kinds of dissonances and disjunctures in the post-apartheid public sphere through an exploration of contemporary discourses of self-identity, subjectivity, history, heritage, and the nation. What happens when the emotional languages of human ancestry and indigenous pasts come into contact with the language of bone specimens, archaeological artefacts, and hard science? What happens when the discourse of heritage resources management finds parity with development interests when it is precisely these interests the discourse itself is designed to manage and even contest? How do African and Creole notions of burial, memory, and community reflect an ongoing struggle between notions of modernity and tradition in the context of the city's contested pasts? It is all of these questions that we must grapple with as we begin to explore the contested meanings and values of the Prestwich Street dead in an (South) African present.

University of Cape Town

Chapter I

Theoretical and methodological points of departure

Introduction

This chapter is an important, and a necessary one, in that it establishes the position of this research in the context of broader currents of theory, methodology, and praxis, and its purpose is threefold. First, I set the stage theoretically viz, the particular place — the African postcolony, the post-apartheid city of Cape Town, the public sphere — in which the battles over the fate of the Prestwich Street burial site and its remains took place. The three theoretical points of departure I discuss, in this regard, are as follows: 'the African postcolony in a globalising world'; 'the post-apartheid city of Cape Town'; and, 'the public sphere'. Second, I discuss the methodological approach I take in my close-reading of the discourses at play in the Prestwich Street contestations. In particular I consider a critical discourse analysis (Fairclough & Wodak 1997; Fairclough 1999) as a methodological point of departure and research tool in constructing my interpretations of the Prestwich Street archive. Third, I discuss my research process both in terms of the preceding discussions on theory and method.

1.1 The African postcolony in a globalising world

The ways in which the African continent and its human populations have been thought about and understood has undergone major revision in recent years (Mudimbe 1988; Appiah 1992; Diawara 1998; Mbembe 2001).¹¹ From the trope of Africa's primordial darkness to the trope of its victimhood, from Joseph Conrad's "canonical" *Heart of darkness* (1902) to Jeffrey Sachs' almost equally prolific *The end of poverty* (2006), Africa has for long been interpreted as little more than a land of brutality, mayhem, and despair. In this mode of thinking and understanding, what Ato Quayson (2001, p. 153) has called 'the Western imaginary', Achille Mbembe (2001, p. 1) writes that 'Africa is never seen as possessing things and attributes properly part of "human nature" —

¹¹ In a statement that emphasises the depth of knowledge and experience that has originated from the continent over many thousands of years, but also challenges the myth that Africa is a land of nothingness, Nasseem (2002, p. 259) explains that 'on this continent, humankind has gone through a long history of evolution. The march through several millennia of its existence has been characterised by a lot of thinking, a lot of doing, hence a lot of reflection and self-reflection...transmitted from one generation to another'.

Or, when it is, its things and attributes are generally of a lesser value, little importance, and poor quality. It is this elementariness and primitiveness that makes Africa the world *par excellence* of all that is incomplete, mutilated and unfinished, its history reduced to a series of setbacks of nature in its quest for humankind (ibid).

In mapping out a different mode of thought and understanding, a different paradigmatics, for the study of the continent's individuals and collectivities (its human populations), I take as a key co-ordinate the work of contemporary post-colonial theorist, Mbembe, whose contributions to thinking Africa differently I understand to be imperative to both the multi-disciplinary study of its pasts and presents, as well as to the making of its futures (Ralphs 2007).¹²

The African postcolony,¹³ however, is not only locally and particularly African in its historic and geographic situation; the African postcolony, and its peoples, like peoples from elsewhere, are located at the nexus of an intricate yet disparate trellis of global relations and 'scapes' — economic, political, cultural and ideological (Appadurai 1993, p. 221; see also Appadurai 2002, p. 22).¹⁴ It is this assorted image of the African postcolony, then, as local and global space-time, as a place of temporal and spatial simultaneities, as a place of multiple and intersecting human imaginaries, identities, and subjectivities, a field of 'transitional realities moving at different rates of progress' (Quayson 2001, p. 151), and a series of urban and rural milieus and topographies characterised by complex space-time sequences, rhythms, and motions, that I wish to set in place as a first theoretical point of departure.

One of the major contributions to scholarship of Mbembe's work is his criticism of two dominant paradigms of thought and praxis that have led the study of Africa into a 'dead end' (Mbembe 2002a, p. 242). These are nativism and Afro-radicalism.

¹² For a thoughtful review of On the postcolony, see Ato Quayson's 'Breaches in the Commonplace' (2001). For critical reviews of the work of Mbembe, see Diagne (2002), Dirlík (2002), Gilroy (2002), Guyer (2003), Jewsiewicki (2002), Jules-Rosette (2002), McNee (2001), Murungu (2004), Quayson (2002), Verges (2002), Vogler (2002), and Weate (2003).

¹³ As Mbembe (1992, p. 3; see also, Mbembe 2001, p. 102) writes, 'The notion "postcolony" identifies specifically a given historical trajectory — that of societies emerging from the experience of colonisation and the violence which the colonial relationship, *par excellence*, involves. To be sure, the postcolony is chaotically pluralistic, yet it has nonetheless an internal coherence. It is a specific system of signs, a particular way of fabricating simulacra or re-forming stereotypes. The postcolony is characterised by a distinctive style of political improvisation, by a tendency to excess and a lack of proportion as well as by distinctive ways in which identities are multiplied, transformed and put into circulation!'

¹⁴ If the end of colonialism in Africa, and the creation of independent nation-states brought about the "birth" of the African postcolony, then this did not happen in a political or historical vacuum. The African postcolony exists not only in and of itself; it also exists in and amongst, and is subject to, the forces and flows of a globalising world. Mbembe (2001, p. 9) acknowledges this fact when he writes that 'African societies, their own *raison d'être* their relation to solely themselves, are rooted in a multiplicity of times, trajectories, and rationalities that, although particular and sometimes local, cannot be conceptualized outside of a world that is, so to speak, globalized.'

Thus, where nativism 'proposes a return to an ontological and mythical "Africanness" in which the African subject might once again say "I" and express him- or herself in his or her own name', Afro-radicalism 'claims to have founded a so-called revolutionary politics which seeks to break away from imperialism and dependence' (Mbembe 2002b, p. 629). On the one hand, nativism looks back (and forward) to an essential and 'pure' Africa, free, as it were, of time and history. Afro-radicalism, on the other hand, attempts to unshackle the chains that bind Africa and Africans to the West with the (physical, intellectual) tools of the West.¹⁵ Mbembe (2002b) argues that as much as nativism and Afro-radicalism are distinctive paradigms of thought and praxis, they are unified inasmuch as they 'share the same *episteme*' (629; original emphasis).

[O]n the one hand, both rely on an idea of "good" and "evil" — a moral economy — whose power of falsification derives from its opaque ties with the cult of suffering and victimization. On the other hand, both consist of superstitions that function to persuade us that nothing is happening in Africa because history (the slave trade, colonization, and apartheid) has already happened, and anything more would be nothing but a repetition of these originary events.

'Marxist and nationalist catechisms today' he writes, 'are no more than hollow constructs of dead elements' (Mbembe 2002b, p. 629-30).

If, according to Mbembe, the paradigms of nativism and Afro-radicalism suffer from philosophical impoverishment, from a profound sense of conceptual lack, then he attempts to theorise the African past, present and future in a different way, that is, from the perspective of the African subject herself. Mbembe's point of departure is to equate time with subjectivity; where time is not linear or sequential, but rather circular, entangled: time is an 'an interlocking of presents, pasts, and futures, that retain their depths of other presents, pasts, and futures' (Mbembe 2001, p. 8).

I started from the idea that there is a close philosophical relation between temporality and subjectivity - that, in some way, one can envisage subjectivity itself as temporality. The intuition behind this idea was that, for each time and each age, there exists something distinctive and particular — or, to use the term, a "spirit" (*Zeitgeist*). These distinctive and particular things are constituted by a set of material practices, signs, figures, superstitions, images, and fictions that, because they are available to the individual's imagination and intelligence and actually experienced, form what might be called "languages of life" (*ibid*, p. 15).

The way(s), therefore, in which the African subject "writes" her experience of the postcolony through these languages of life, are precisely the ways in which she creates meaning for herself in the world: 'the African subject is like any other human being: he or she engages in *meaningful acts*' (Mbembe 2001, p. 6). The act of creating meaning by writing her experience through these languages of life, Mbembe calls 'self-styling' (2002a, p. 269).

¹⁵ For a more in-depth discussion, in this regard, see Ralphs (2007). See also Nasseem (2002).

The scholarship of Mbembe and in particular his central themes of time as entangled, the political as improvised, and identity as styled, fashioned, home-made, has had a profound impact on my thinking. As I understand it, Mbembe offers the student and scholar of Africa the widest possible lens through which to creatively read the lived experiences of the African in the postcolony, and in the world at large. Importantly it is not a lens of thought that sees Africa as a continent entirely despoiled by war, poverty, and suffering — the lens of victimisation. It is also not a lens of thought that produces readings of Africa and Africans as other in relation to the West. Rather, it is a lens of critical thought grounded in a philosophy of the equality of the African — the human being — and of his or her human existences, imaginaries, identities, subjectivities, and sovereignty in a globalising world.

1.2 The post-apartheid city of Cape Town

The colony that developed out of the activities of the VOC at the Cape from the middle of the seventeenth century, and the British Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was styled in the years up until 1838 as a place of slavery (Ross 1983; Shell 1984; Worden 1985; Worden & Crais 1994). Human beings from human populations scattered throughout the African continent, as well as elsewhere in the world — South and Southeast Asia, Batavia, and Madagascar — were brought to the Cape as slave labour. The forced relocation of slave populations to the Cape was not only a bi-oceanic (Atlantic and Indian Ocean) and trans-continental movement; the peoples who lived at the Cape before the arrival of the VOC, were also made to be slaves, as were their descendants.

If, therefore, the Cape colonial world was characterised by a hotchpotch of peoples brought to the Cape from various places marked the Dutch and British imperial maps, and by southern Africa's pre-colonial inhabitants, and indeed by a great many mixtures of these and other various metropolitan human populations,¹⁶ then from 1948 onwards the newly elected Nationalist government began to re-classify these peoples in terms of their perceived race. As much as Cape colonial society was a racist society in and of itself (Bickford-Smith 1995a, 1995b), the relative heterogeneity of life in the Cape Colony was, from 1948, re-imagined in terms of the homogeneity of the apartheid state's racial designations. People were classified in at least one of three ways: as "white" or "European"; as "Coloured"; or as "non-white", "non-European", or "black". The social engineering of race gave rise

¹⁶ As Cronin (2006, p. 49) writes, 'To understand Cape Town, you need also add to this mix white working-class men and women, sailors, cooks, bartenders, blacksmiths and coopers rubbing shoulders at work with all and sundry, or white bandieten and ship-deserters ganging up with runaway slaves in drosters caves. We should certainly not romanticise about the pre-apartheid past of Cape Town, but neither should we lose sight of the proto-non-racialism that was forged unevenly in localities all about our city, as Capetonians went about their daily lives.'

to the social engineering of the landscape in the form of the notorious Group Areas Act (No. 41 of 1950), and a number of other hated laws.

The post-apartheid city of Cape Town as people and landscape therefore not only bear the marks of South Africa's apartheid histories; Cape Town also bears the marks, concealed and visible in conscious and unconscious herstories and histories, of slavery and colonialism's deep pasts. These deep pasts are evident in the present, for example, in the surnames of many of Cape Town's residents, whose slave ancestors' original names were erased by their masters or traders, and replaced whimsically with the names of months of the year, or places on the imperial map; or, as Cronin writes, in our 'most homely interjections *'eine* and *'siesr*, which 'come to us from the Khoi, e-na and tsi' (Cronin 2006, p. 49). The Cape colonial past, of course, also exists in the present through its many historic buildings, monuments, and statues in the city and its environs; contested burial sites, indeed, are no exception in this regard (Davids 1985; Tayob 2007).

Yet reading, writing, and interpreting the post-apartheid city of Cape Town only in the light of its colonial and apartheid pasts, which is Mbembe's general point (see above), or, indeed, in the light of its increasingly unpredictable global futures, is to fail to conceptualise the city's "now" — its contemporaneity (Nuttall 2004). This mini-dissertation therefore departs from two dominant ways of interpreting the post-apartheid city's present: on the one hand, the global city paradigm (Mbembe and Nuttall 2004, p. 360), the core precept of which is the idea that 'contemporary life-forms and social structures are profoundly shaped by the global circuits of capital, and the city-form is the spatial expression of the shifts in the geography and structure of the international economy' (WISER 2007); and, on the other hand, the 'urban development paradigm', the core precept of which is the idea that the city is 'a problem to be solved' (ibid; see also, Nuttall & Mbembe 2004, p. 353).¹⁷ Writing from within, yet simultaneously departing from, the tradition of Benjamin and de Certeau, a recent wave of critical writing on the post-apartheid city has emerged from the South African academy to challenge these paradigms, in particularly interesting ways (Nuttall 2004; Nuttall & Mbembe 2004; Field, Swanson & Meyer 2007; Watson 2006; Shepherd, Murray & Hall 2007).

For example, urban theorist Sarah Nuttall (2004, p. 740) emphasises its complexity when she writes of the city 'as a spatial formation, its density as a concentration of people, things, institutions and architectural forms; the heterogeneity of lives juxtaposed in close proximity, the citiness of cities, the ways in which they gather, mix, remix, separate, conceal and display and the ways in which urban life becomes the irreducible product of mixture, each urban moment sparking

¹⁷ In a featurestyle article focused on the Prestwich Street burial site, journalist Theresa Smith (2003) wrote of 'the unexpected discovery of skeletons at a Waterfront construction site' as having posed 'the latest problem in a dilemma for the city as it builds on its own past'. An article on the same topic in a now redundant newspaper, *ThisDay*, was headlined 'Paradigm of problems of the city' (Du Plessis 2004).

performative improvisations which are unforeseen and unforeseeable'¹⁸ Similarly, Nuttall and Mbembe (2004, p. 360) describe the city as 'not simply a string of infrastructures, technologies, and legal entities...It also comprises actual people, images and architectural forms, footprints and memories; the city is a place of manifold rhythms, a world of sounds, private freedom, pleasures, and sensations'.

For local oral historians, Sean Field and Felicity Swanson (2007, p. 3), the city 'evokes different feelings and senses, and provides a spatial focus for people to locate memories and identities of place. The geographical limits of a city are marked on maps and policies, but these boundaries do not restrict people's imaginative construction of what it means to be a resident or citizen of, or an outsider in, a particular city.' Poet Stephen Watson (2006, p. 9) has written that, 'As with any city that has been truly lived in, loved, and at time suffered, it is a space coloured by memory, ambivalences, disaffections, obsessions.' While Murray and Shepherd (2007, p. 1) emphasise that cities are 'sites of memory and desire (and also sites of fear and forgetting); as contested spaces given to plays of power and privilege, identity and difference; as palimpsests of historical experience, in which underlying strata disconcertingly erupt into those above; and as lived spaces in the performance of everyday life.'

I hope by now it is clear that the image of the city from which I take my point of departure in this mini-dissertation is that of the city as heterotopia, a place, and a set of places, that intersect, overlap, and mingle with all other places (Foucault 1986). As Foucault (1986, p. 22) asserted in an important lecture, 'Of other spaces',

We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein.

1.3 The public sphere

The notion of the public sphere is often invoked as an explanatory device in the study of cities and of their public cultures (for a recent example, see Watson 2006). What, though, do we mean when we invoke the notion of the public sphere? What are its valences, its meanings, and its significations? How is the public sphere a useful notion for understanding identities, subjectivities, and lived experience in the heterotopic spaces of the African postcolony and the post-apartheid city?

One of the prominent commentators on the notion of the public sphere and its relation to democratic societies is the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1989). The public sphere, according to Habermas, is a medium for the deepening and strengthening of the practice of democracy. The public sphere, as Habermas conceives it, is fundamentally an avenue through which multiple opinions — outside of

¹⁸ For an extension of this notion of the city, see Miller's (2007) recent article from the Sunday Independent 'Inside out'.

the official opinions of the state — can be articulated, interrogated and debated. In the words of Fraser (1993, pp. 519-520), Habermas characterises the public sphere as a 'theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk' —

It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, and hence an institutionalised area of discursive interaction. This arena is conceptually distinct from the state; it is a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state. The public sphere in Habermas' sense is also conceptually distinct from the official economy; it is not an arena of market relations but rather one of discursive relations, a theatre for debating and deliberating rather than buying and selling.

Fraser provides the image of the bar or coffee house as exemplary of the 'theatre house' of the European public sphere.

However, this particular conceptualisation of the public sphere as a unified space, the space of the male bourgeoisie in European society, has been made the subject of criticism by thinkers who see in the idea of the public sphere not only a sense of multiplicity and difference, but also radical race, class and gender stratifications in society. The work of Nancy Fraser in her essay 'Rethinking the public sphere: a contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy' (1993) is a case in point.

Fraser (1993, p. 520) begins 'Rethinking the public sphere' by suggesting that the notion of the public sphere in Habermas' conception is 'indispensable to critical social theory and democratic political practice' but that it is not 'wholly satisfactory'. Drawing on a revisionist historiography, Fraser critiques the main assumptions upon which Habermas' conception of the public sphere is constructed, as a way of arriving at an 'alternative, post-bourgeois conception of the public sphere' (ibid).¹⁹ This alternative, post-bourgeois public sphere, Fraser argues, is one in which 'multiple but unequal publics participate' (ibid, p. 530). Moreover, this alternative public sphere is not simply an arena of discursive interaction, of political participation, but is also a space for the 'formation and enactment of social identities.' Fraser suggests this 'means that participation is not simply a matter of being able to state propositional contents that are neutral with respect to form of expression. Rather...participation means being able to speak in one's own voice, and thereby simultaneously to construct and express one's cultural identity through idiom and style' (ibid, p. 529). The question is: what are the natures of these 'multiple but unequal publics' in which political participation is enacted and performed, and identities enunciated and expressed?

Fraser challenges Habermas' unified conception of the public sphere by contending that 'in stratified societies, arrangements that accommodate a plurality of competing publics better promotes the ideal of participatory parity than does a single,

¹⁹ The revisionist historiography cited by Fraser includes the work of Joan Landes, Mary Ryan and Geoff Eley.

comprehensive, overarching public' (ibid, p. 527). She introduces the notion of the '*subaltern counter public*,' for example, to describe 'parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, needs, and interests' (ibid; original emphasis). In particular, Fraser writes of the feminist movement of the late-twentieth century 'with its variegated array of journals, bookstores, publishing companies, film and video distribution networks, lecture series, research centres; academic programmes, conferences, conventions, festivals and local meeting places' (ibid, p. 528) as an example of a subaltern counter public.

In this public sphere, feminist women have invented new terms for describing social reality.. Armed with such language, we have recast our needs and identities, thereby reducing, although not eliminating, the extent of our disadvantage in official public spheres (ibid).

Fraser also introduces the notions of the 'weak public' and the 'strong public' (ibid, p. 534) as constitutive of the plurality of competing publics. The former denotes the public whose members are opinion formers but not decision makers. The weak public is weak precisely because of its lack of political influence. The latter, the strong public, denotes the parliamentary or legislative publics, whose members are both opinion formers and decision makers. Fraser suggests that 'the force of public opinion is strengthened when a body representing it is empowered to translate such 'opinion' into authoritative decision,' but, '[at] the same time, there remain important questions about the relationship between parliamentary strong publics and the weak publics to which they are supposed to be accountable' (ibid).

In her conclusion to 'Rethinking the public sphere' Fraser suggests that a 'post-bourgeois conception [of the public sphere] would enable us to think about strong and weak publics, as well as about various hybrid forms' (ibid, p. 536). I return to this useful notion in chapter six in relation to my discussion of the formation of the Hands Off Committee and the PPPC.

In thinking through the notion of the public sphere from Habermas to Fraser we are confronted with a sense of the diversity and irregularity of publics; of publics constituted by competing claims and opposing voices; of publics in cooperation and contestation with each other; and of publics of varying strengths and degrees of intensity. Put simply, we are confronted by a public sphere with many topographies and lines of intersection.²⁰ If, moreover, the post-apartheid public sphere in particular is characterised by multiple theatres for performing political participation, nurturing political accountability, and for expressing identities and subjectivities, then it

²⁰ In her book *City Publics* (2006), Sophie Watson builds on many of the precepts of Fraser's conception of the public sphere. Watson (2006, p. 7) writes of the public sphere as 'a space of heterogeneity where differences are acknowledged as constituted in power relations' and as 'always in a state of emergence, never complete and always contested, constituted in antagonistic relations, in that it is implicated in the production of identities as relational and produced through difference.'

remains to be explored in this discussion my approach for reading and interpreting the public sphere as complex discursive space.

1.4 Discourse, knowledge and power

I would like to begin, then, with reference to an essay that George Lamming presented to the 1st International Congress of Black Writers and Artists in 1956 entitled 'The Negro Writer and his World' (1958). In this essay Lamming draws on a classroom scenario described in Charles Dickens' novel, *Hard Times*, as a way of illustrating the relationship between knowledge and power. I understand Lamming's illustration using Dickens to be an instructive one and therefore worth quoting at length.

"Girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, "I ain't know that girl. Who is that girl?"

"Sissy Jupe, sir," explained number twenty, blushing, standing up and curtsying.

"Sissy is not a name," said Mr. Gradgrind. "Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia."

It's father as calls me Sissy, sir," returned the young girl, in a trembling voice, and with another curtsy.

"Then he has no business to do it," said Mr. Gradgrind.

"Tell him he musn't. Cecilia Jupe. Let me see. What is your father?"

"He belongs to the horse-riding if you please, Sir," says Sissy. Mr. G. frowned and waved off the objectionable calling with his hand.

"We don't want to know anything about that here. You musn't tell us about that here. Your father breaks horses, don't he?"

"If you please, sir, when they can get back any to break, they do break horses in the ring, sir?"

"You musn't tell about the ring here. Very well, then. Describe your father as a horse-breaker. He doctors sick horses, I dare say?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Very well, then. He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier and a horse breaker. Give me your definition of a horse."

(Sissy Jupe thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand).

"Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!" said Mr. Gradgrind for the general behalf of the all the little pitchers.

"Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest of animals! Some boy's definition of a horse. Bitzer, yours."

"Bitzer," said Thomas Gradgrind. "Your definition of a horse."

"Quadrupled, Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four-eye teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring, in marshy countries, sheds hoofs too. Hoofs hard but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth. Thus (and much more)," said Bitzer.

"Now girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind, "You know what a horse is" (pp. 38-39).

The particular insight Lamming gestures toward when he cites this passage is as follows. The definition of a thing — the thing that a word signifies — depends on in what order or hierarchy of knowledge the definition of that thing is located. Bitzer's definition, his knowledge of the horse, acts effectively to silence Sissy Jupe's

knowledge of the same horse. The important point, as critical as this would be in a different discussion, is not that Bitzer's definition of a horse is a better or more suitable definition of a horse than Sissy's, had she been given an opportunity to articulate a definition herself. But rather that Mr. Gradgrind is invested with power as the children's teacher and thus validates Bitzer's definition because it is the definition that he knows, understands, and is in a position to empower. In this way he not only validates Bitzer's definition; he also, implicitly, displaces Sissy's knowledge of the horse and therefore disempowers her.

We are able to conclude from this example that Bitzer's discourse — his way of defining and knowing the horse — was the hegemonic or authoritative discourse, as validated by Mr. Gradgrind; while Sissy's discourse although silenced in this passage was the subordinated or subjugated discourse.

There are of course many descriptions, drawn from different analytical traditions, of the manner in which discourse functions (see especially Coupland and Jaworski 2006; Fairclough 1992; Foucault 2001 [1972]). It is not my intention in this chapter to explore these analytical traditions, and their various understandings of discourse, but rather to map out some broad conceptual coordinates for understanding power and knowledge as specific functions of discourse.

Put simply, discourse is 'language in use' (Candlin 1997, iix, in Coupland and Jaworski 2006, p. 3). Discourse is a term used to describe the way in which meaning and value are constructed through language(s). 'Discourse,' Coupland and Jaworski (2006, p. 6) explain, 'is implicated in expressing people's points of view and value systems'. Whether it is through talk, text (visual and written), or other forms of signification, such as performance, discourse is the vehicle with which we communicate using languages. However, there is more to the notion of discourse beyond its function in and as language. This "more" is the epistemological quality of discourse.

Stuart Hall (1992, p. 291) describes discourse as 'a group of statements which provide a language for talking about — i.e. a way of representing — a particular kind of knowledge'. Hall explains that when 'statements about a particular topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way.' The crucial point that Hall brings to our attention is that discourse 'also limits the other ways in which the topic can be constructed'.

In a work of local significance, *White writing* (1988), Coetzee describes what he calls the Discourse of the Cape. The Discourse of the Cape in the context of the early European travel writers in Southern Africa is the manner of speaking about, but also thinking, writing, and imagining, the "Hottentot". In an interview with Richard Begam (1992, p. 424), Coetzee described the main precepts of the Discourse of the Cape. 'What I call the Discourse of the Cape is an anthropological or proto-anthropological discourse, and it exists today to the extent that anthropology, as a science of mankind based on (Western) reason, continues to flourish. There are still plenty of white South Africans who trap themselves inside it when they try to think, in a "rational," well meaning way, about blacks'.

In a key work in the field of discourse studies, *The archaeology of knowledge*, Foucault (2001 [1972], P. 38) introduces the idea of the 'discursive formation' to describe the relationship between individual statements and the discourses through which such statements are constituted. The ground upon which this idea rests is that statements within particular domains of knowledge — Foucault writes of the disciplines of 'medicine, economics or grammar' — and the manner in which these statements cohere in constructing a conception of the knowledge object, demonstrate a general consistency. It is a consistency that cannot however be reduced to the 'unity of a logical architecture'. Rather, Foucault (2001, p. 37; original emphasis) suggests that this consistency can be described as a field of implication or, in his words, a '*system of dispersion*' —

Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statements, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a *discursive formation* (ibid).

Thus, the relationship between individual statements, discourses and discursive formations can be described as follows: discourses are made up of groups of individual statements that are constituted in and of themselves in discursive formations. Another example of a discursive formation, *par excellence*, is what Edward Said (1978) has called Orientalism.

There are two other relationships that are important to point out — the relationship between discourse, *knowledge and power*, and *the relationship between discourse and truth*. Of the former Hall (1992, p. 295) writes that not 'only is discourse always implicated in *power*; discourse is one of the systems through which power circulates.' That is, 'knowledge which a discourse produces constitutes a kind of power, exercised over those who are 'known'. When that knowledge is exercised in practice, those who are 'known' in a particular way will be subject (i.e. subjected) to it...Those who produce the discourse also have the power to *make it true*'. For Foucault, this relationship is mutually exclusive.

We should admit that power produces knowledge.. .That power and knowledge directly imply one another: that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute.. .power relations (Foucault 1980, p. 27 in Hall 1992, p. 293).

This relationship is well-illustrated, I think, in the example of Mr. Gradgrind, who empowers a particular, although not necessarily the only, definition of a horse, when he says to Sissy Jupe, Now girl number twenty.. .You know what a horse is'.

This particular moment in *Hard Times* also leads us usefully toward conceiving of the relationship between discourse and truth. The relationship between discourse and truth is established when a particular knowledge of a thing is empowered — through the vehicle of discourse — to be the "true" knowledge of that thing This

empowerment of a particular way of knowing the thing constructs what Foucault (1980, p.131, in Hall 1992, p. 295) calls a 'regime of truth'. 'Each society' he writes, 'has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is the types of discourses which it accepts and makes function as true' (ibid).

By way of summary, discourse is language in use. It is the medium through which language travels in the construction of our understandings of the world — its objects, people, and its multiple cycles and rhythms. Important to note is that discourse is not neutral or value-free; discourse is profoundly political, by which I mean that discourse is implicated in both the workings of knowledge, power and truth, a three-way reciprocity that is evident in the example of Sissy Jupe and Mr. Gradgrind in Dickens' *Hard Times*. The vital point is that when a "thing" is thought of or known in a certain way vis-à-vis statements that are made within a particular discourse about that thing, a regime of truth is established which, implicitly or explicitly, silences or excludes alternative ways of thinking about or knowing the thing. The essential task of analysing discourse is therefore the task of unravelling or denaturalising the regimes of truth that society 'accepts and makes function as true', and is part of a discussion to which I now turn.

1.5 Research process

The 'resource matrix' (Quayson 2001, p. 152, 161), the archive that I have elected to research and to draw upon for the purpose of this mini-dissertation is a rich body of knowledge in and of itself. In terms of its constitution, the largest portion of the archive is made up of official documentation — appeal documents, press releases, reports, minutes of meetings — as well as a range of newspaper articles, handwritten letters, e-mail correspondence, oral interviews and their transcripts, documentary films, architectural plans, advertising brochures, and websites. In addition, there is also a growing body of secondary literature, comprising published and unpublished theses and articles (see chapter two), all which have contributed significantly to the wealth of the archive. It is this cornucopia, then, of primary and secondary documentation, of oral and visual text, of digital forms of representation, to which I refer throughout this mini-dissertation as the 'Prestwich Street archive' (Ernst 2006,

p.3).²¹

Jaworski and Coupland (2006, p. 6) write that 'texts are 'sediments' of meaning, which, to varying degrees, will reflect global as well as local discourse practices'. On the basis of this interpretation of the text itself as palimpsest, I want to suggest at the outset that all of the texts that constitute the Prestwich Street archive provide us with useful clues into both the (epistemic) formations of knowledge and the forces and interests at play, the discourse practices, that took shape during the period of the

²¹ All material cited in this dissertation, other than my own collected research material, was accessed from the collections of the South African Heritage Resources Agency, the University of Cape Town's Library's Manuscripts and Archives Department, as well as the personal collections of Nick Shepherd.

Prestwich Street contestations. As a way of approaching these texts, interpretatively, I draw on a critical discourse analysis as a methodological strategy shaping my close reading of the Prestwich Street archive.

Jaworski and Coupland (2006, p. 7) also explain that the 'forensic task of discourse analysis [is] to track how various forms of discourse, and their associated values and assumptions, are incorporated into a particular text, why and with what effects.' In different terms, a discourse analysis probes the content, form, genre and style of a text as a way of uncovering its 'hidden meaning[s] and value structures' (ibid, p. 28). However, a discourse analysis is not only descriptive or explanatory project; it is also a political project. Fairclough (199, p. 27 in Jaworski & Coupland, 2006, p. 29) argues that the task of a critical discourse analysis is to 'denaturalise' — to disrupt, to question, to problematise, to jam — the regimes of truth, the naturalised discourses, that are used and circulated in society, and that come to be accepted as common sense (Hall 1981 in Jaworski & Coupland 2006, p. 397). A critical discourse analysis is therefore both a deconstructive and a reconstructive project. As Fowler (1981, p. 25, in Jaworski & Coupland 2006, p. 27) reminds us,

All knowledge, all objects, are constructs: criticism analyses the processes of construction and, acknowledging the artificial quality of the categories concerned, offers the possibility that we might profitably conceive the world in some alternative way.

In the context of the Prestwich Street contestations, the various discourses at play are not always self-evident, and have required a careful process of conceptual excavation in order to be shown up, denaturalised, and made the subject of criticism. **In** this regard, I have one final comment to make about selection of texts for analysis.

The Prestwich Street archive is, as I have already outlined, a growing body of documentation, oral recordings, and footage. Part of the challenge of navigating the archive therefore was the location of texts, or parts thereof, which lent themselves as evidence of the four more-or-less distinctive languages and paradigms of thought for speaking and thinking about, and knowing the Prestwich Street dead. In this sense my approach has been inductive rather than deductive, but also selective and partial, rather than all-encompassing and wide-ranging. I do not understand this as a weakness in my approach but, rather, as a productive means to engage; in critical discussion about a series of issues that I understand to be of particular importance to contemporary forms of memorialisation, public historical production, and heritage practice in the post-apartheid public sphere.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored two territories of the 'research imagination' (Appadurai 1999): theory and methodology. First, I discussed three theoretical thematics as points of departure: a new way of theorising the African post-colonial present in the context

of the multiple flows and cycles of the global moment; the challenge to the global city and urban development paradigms vis-a-vis the recent wave of critical theory on the post-apartheid city; and, ways of thinking through the notion of the public sphere. Second, I mapped out the relationship between discourse, knowledge, and power using the example of Sissy Jupe. In this vein, I also considered a critical discourse analysis as a methodological tool shaping my close reading of the Prestwich Street archive. The final part of this chapter concerned the nature of the Prestwich Street archive, as well as my research process. Chapter two thus proceeds with a review of the secondary literature relevant to the subject of this mini-dissertation.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 2

A literature review

Introduction

There are a number of published and unpublished scholarly works, and works of commentary, that have grappled in various ways with the complexities and significances of the Prestwich Street burial site and its remains, as well as surrounding issues, contestations and debates. Any analysis of the subject would therefore be impoverished and incomplete without recognising the undertakings of these writers, not only to this growing field of knowledge, in and of itself, but also to the field of its contestation *as knowledge*. Thus, this literature review documents, categorically, the key interventions of these writers, as well as what I understand to be their major contributions to the field. It is not, however, my aim to style this review simply as a summary; rather, in mapping out the intellectual territories of the different contributions, I attempt to pry open the cracks and fissures in these works as a way of *creating a space for my own intervention in the form of this mini-dissertation*. This chapter is therefore vital in establishing a general field of implication, and locating the particular intellectual openings in the existing body of research, for this research as a whole.

I would like to begin with a suggestion that the literature on Prestwich Street can be divided into at least two distinctive categories: a critical inter-disciplinary literature on the one hand, and an instrumentalist literature on the other hand. Although there is a degree of overlap, across categories, in many of the authors' approaches to the subject and, indeed, an irregularity in respect of the quantity and quality of the work that has been produced hitherto in each category, I think the literature can be justifiably delineated as such on the basis of the particularity of each work's epistemic orientation in relation to the subject. Thus, where works in what I call 'a critical inter-disciplinary literature' demonstrate, if abstractly, an awareness of notions of self-reflexivity and open-endedness, and what Anthony Bogues has called a notion of 'critical intellectual work' (2007b), the 'instrumentalist literature' seeks hard-and-fast scientific answers, free, as it were, of politics on the one hand, and of the politicised and racialised nature of knowledge construction, on the other hand. I end this chapter with an assertion of the place of this mini-dissertation as a contribution to a critical interdisciplinary hermeneutics of Prestwich Street.

2.1 A critical inter-disciplinary literature

One of the first position-pieces to be published about the Prestwich Street exhumations was a short essay by peace activists, Heidi Grunebaum and Yazir Henri, entitled 'Re-historicising trauma: reflections on violence and memory in current-day Cape Town' (2005).²² Although 'Re-historicising Trauma' is a short, speculative, and partial reflection on two major historical moments in the post-1994 period, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the events around Prestwich Street, it nonetheless realises its central aim, which is to problematise a dominant discourse of 'nation-building-as-reconciliation' (p. 1) in the context of these difficult transitional moments. Paradoxically, as moments in and through which the post-apartheid public sphere has opened itself up to the secrets and messiness of the South African past, Grunebaum and Henri I think correctly argue that this "opening up" has also led to the "closing down" of the public sphere as a space for self-expression, political consciousness, conscientisation, and mourning.

Expressions of anger, resentment, indignation and self-restitution have become increasingly inexpressible in public spheres. Such expressions are relegated to an interior intrasubjective world free of politics of collective meaning making as the spaces for making sense of and organising collectively around many pressing socio-economic issues have become increasingly splintered (ibid).

Indeed the inability and at times outright unwillingness on the part of the Prestwich Street heritage managers to engage with the emotions of people in respect of the symbolic meaning and value of the burial site, is an altogether vital point in the context of the statutory public processes that accompanied the exhumations, and therefore one which I explore and develop in chapter five.

The second major point Grunebaum and Henri contribute to the debate in 'Re-historicising Trauma' is to draw the necessary lines of connection between: the surfacing of the bones of the dead in the post-apartheid period; the vicissitudes of South Africa's colonial and apartheid histories, in particular the histories of erasure vis-à-vis slavery and apartheid forced removals; and urban redevelopment vis-à-vis The Rockwell. It is precisely because of the embedded-ness and interlocking of this complex set of relationships, the entanglements of the postcolony, and the political fervour of the post-apartheid moment, which makes the surfacing of the dead a moment of deep historical significance.

[The] Prestwich Street burial ground is more than the fleeting social recovery of the dead and their unrecoverable histories outside of the shadows of historical denial and followed by continuous building over. The uncovering of the "hidden" presence of their bodies in the centre of the city rehistoricises the connection between the development of the Cape Flats, the legislation of "race" categories and its endorsed

²² See also Ryan (2005, esp. pp. 40-41) for a brief discussion of the Prestwich Street contestations in relation to Cape Town's V&A Waterfront and post-apartheid mall culture more generally.

dehumanisation of all human life not classified as "white", land and property expropriations, forced removals and the human cost of constructing the modern colonial and Apartheid city (ibid, p. 4).

This intimate and important connection between past and present is one which the Hands Off Committee established and emphasised as axiomatic in their conceptualisation of the significance of the site and its remains. I explore its meanings in more depth in chapter six.

Grunebaum and Henri conclude 'Rehistoricising Trauma' with an invocation of an alternative notion of time in relation to the temporality of development and what they aptly term, 'the political economy of rushing on'. 'The time of the everyday of development' they write, 'has a different temporality to the time of mourning, self-reclamation and discovery' (ibid, p. 6). I return to the notion of 'time for the dead' in chapter six, as well as the 'time of development' in chapter three.

In 2006, two masters' mini-dissertations that fall into the category of a critical inter-disciplinary literature on Prestwich Street were submitted to the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the University of Cape Town (UCT). Respectively, these works are Michael Weeder's 'The palaces of memory: a reconstruction of District One, Cape Town, before and after the Group Areas Act' (2006); and Christian Ernsten's 'Stylizing Cape Town: problematizing the heritage management of Prestwich Street' (2006). Both works are contributions to a critical inter-disciplinary literature as both establish a series of important criticisms of the dominant readings of the Prestwich Street burial site, which were framed in terms of a threefold, private relationship between the development team, the archaeological team, and the South African heritage authorities; as opposed to appeal to a broader Cape Town public acutely aware of the need for restorative post-colonial public pasts.

'The Palaces of Memory' is an ambitious explication of visual and written history. Over its course, Weeder successfully attempts to weave multiple stories — his personal story and that of his family (an autobiography), the story of District One (a forgotten, pre-apartheid and apartheid public history), the story of nineteenth century colonial identity formation vis-à-vis the coloniser's cemeteries and burial practices (a colonial history), and the story of the Prestwich Street exhumations (a post-apartheid public history). The impetus behind the weaving together of these stories, Weeder (2006, p. 1) tells us, lies in a deep 'desire to "own" my own personal ,and public history'. The themes of ownership, memory, identity, class, culture, and race are themes that cut to the heart of the battles over the Prestwich Street dead, and themes which Weeder develops powerfully in 'The Palaces of Memory'. For example, in his introduction to the work, Weeder recounts feelings of 'sadness and anger' while present on site at Prestwich Street as a witness to the first wave of exhumations.

Standing at the burial grounds between mounds of sand, watching as a half-uncovered skeleton was further exposed by the hands of an archaeology student, I became aware of a mixture of sadness and anger at what had been done to communities over time, best symbolised in the present-day bureaucracy's refuge in the term "unknown

graves". All of us standing on the site that day would find ourselves divided by our response to the remains of the dead (ibid, p. 6).

It remains to be stated that it is precisely these divided responses that Weeder notes at the outset, but does not explore in full in 'The Palaces of Memory', that I undertake to map out more fully in this mini-dissertation.

A key point to be made in relation to Weeder's dissertation and the quoted passage in particular, relates directly to questions of emotion and the use of emotion as political strategy. One of the core tensions central to the Prestwich Street contestations was a tendency to see as distinctive and given notions of reason and emotion (see chapter five). Thus, certain individuals and in particular members of the Hands Off Committee were deemed to be "too emotional" or to be "thinking with their hearts but not with the heads". Indeed, a factor that contributed to the failure of the Prestwich Street heritage management was precisely a sense of incapacity, and disinclination, in conceptualising ways of publicly coming to terms with people's deep-seated sadness and anger, rooted not only in recent experiences of apartheid, but also in symbolic identifications with slave histories, as well as multiple histories of the appropriation and destruction of the Cape Khoikhoi.

Ernsten's 'Stylizing Cape Town' (2006) is a critical account of the discourses and practices of the key stakeholders in the management of the Prestwich Street burial site and its remains: SAHRA, the Heritage Resources Section of the City of Cape Town (HRS), and the CSRF. Ernsten's (2006, p. 91) main contention, one which is supported by extensive research, is that the management of the burial site and its remains was characterised by a series of 'improvisations' that were both 'unimaginative and banal'.²³ Rather than espouse and practice the spirit of the NHRA vis-a-vis post-apartheid restorative discourses of memory, nostalgia, identity, reconciliation, and transformation, Ernsten argues that the heritage practitioners tasked with managing the Prestwich Street burial site and its remains drew on the languages and actions of three disciplinary epistemologies — urban planning, development, and cultural resources management — in order to arrive at "reasonable solutions" and "responsible decisions" in respect of the "problems" of the developer.

Ernsten I think rightly characterises the management of the burial site and its remains as a profound failure of the imagination of the heritage managers to conceive of alternative epistemologies and temporalities that demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the subjective and interior nature of the experiences of the city's marginalised populations, past and present.

[The] management of the heritage of Prestwich Street by the HRS, SAHRA and the CSRF did not include a conceptualization of the knowledge-power relation that

²³ In an interview I conducted with Antonia Malan of the UCT Department of Archaeology, Malan confirmed the idea that the management of the Prestwich Street site and its remains was, to a large extent, improvised out of the demands of the moment. 'It was not easy to know where to go' and it was 'difficult to manage', she said (2007, pers. comm., 20 September).

established the exclusion of groups of Coloured and black people in the past and the marginalization of their memories in the present (ibid).

On the one hand, 'The Palaces of Memory' is an especially useful text in exploring the form and content of what Shepherd (2007, p. 19) has called an 'emergent public heritage discourse based on an empathetic identification with the dead, and the needs of social restitution and reconciliation' (see chapter six). On the other hand, I draw on the work of Ernsten in my analysis and discussion of the discourse of heritage resources management in chapter five.

University of Cape Town archaeologist and scholar of public culture, Nick Shepherd, has been a powerful and articulate voice in contesting the ethics of the Prestwich Street exhumations, as well as the forms of disciplinary knowledge, power and praxis produced during the contestations. In a series of focused articles, each of which uses the case of the Prestwich Street dead as a lens through which to explore questions of ethics, heritage, archaeology, and post-apartheid imaginaries and public cultures, Shepherd's interventions, I think, have been amongst the most pointed and critical readings of the exhumations and the ensuing debates (Shepherd, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, forthcoming 2008).

One of the essential contributions that Shepherd makes through these articles, as it relates to the particular focus of this mini-dissertation, is to draw our attention to the fact that the struggle around the burial site and its remains was not simply a struggle over the physicality and materiality of the past, as much as this was an issue. Instead it was a 'struggle over language' (Shepherd 2007, p. 19), of ways of knowing, researching, and representing Cape Town's colonial, apartheid, and post-apartheid pasts. Moreover, the struggle over language in the context of the exhumations gets figured in the nexus of what Shepherd calls 'rival languages of concern' (ibid).

Through the course of events at Prestwich Street a clear polarisation emerges, with those arguing for the exhumations doing so on the basis of the scientific value of the remains as a source to access "hidden histories"...In opposition to this discourse the Hands Off Committee emphasised the language of memory and personal reminiscence. They sought to articulate an alternative set of values (African values, spiritual values), and alternative notions of space/time (the notion of the site as a heritage site or a site of conscience; and in one memorable intervention, the notion of "time for the dead") (Shepherd forthcoming 2008).

It is important to point out that this polarisation was not only fuelled by the demands and interests of two unequally powerful constituencies (certain scientists, the Hands Off Committee (PPPC)), but also, as I show in chapters three and five respectively, by the demands and interests of the developer, as well as those cultural heritage practitioners managing the public processes that surrounded the embattled site.

Although Shepherd's works have clearly mapped out the coordinates of speaking positions characteristic of the different actors engaged in the contestations — an important foundation upon which I rely in this mini-dissertation — these works have not necessarily tracked the development and articulation of these positions in

detail, or engaged extensively with their content and form (their discursive formation). It is within this empirical lacuna, therefore, that I position the critical discourse analysis of this mini-dissertation.

The critical inter-disciplinary literature is enriched by the work of Julian Jonker. In a masters' dissertation completed through the UCT Law Faculty — 'The silence of the dead: ethical and juridical significances of the exhumations at Prestwich Place, Cape Town, 2003-2005' (2005a), Jonker thoughtfully, and eruditely, poses a series of questions about the complex interrelationships between jurisprudence, legal ethics, notions of memory, mourning, haunting, archives, naming, knowledge production, and the site of the grave. I understand the core contribution of Jonker's research to be that of laying the jurisprudential groundwork for further explorations of an ethics of memory and a theory of the law that would demonstrate the capacity to consider notions of descendant communities in relation to the unnamed dead (see in particular, pp. 49-69 and pp. 76-116). On an empirical note, 'The silence of the dead' also provides a series of useful contextual discussions of the debates around repatriation and cultural heritage management in North America and Australia, as well as the legal form and jurisprudence of the NHRA, both of which I draw on in chapters four and five. A summary of Jonker's main precepts and argument in 'The silence of the dead' appears in the published article 'Excavating the legal subject: the unnamed dead of Prestwich Place, Cape Town' (2005b).

In a follow-up essay, 'Unburying the dead in the "Mother City": urban topographies of erasure', Heidi Grunebaum (2007, p. 214) takes up the important questions of what it means for the dead to return 'in their own time', and of what it means for the living to exercise 'time for the dead'. Grunebaum situates this discussion within a broader criticism of the neo-liberal economic development paradigm, its relation to the city of Cape Town, and, in particular, as new developments in Green Point dislodge and discard the city's historic space along racial lines. She writes melancholically of a changing city.

The building cranes that hover across the skyline of the central city and of its well-heeled coastal suburbs attest to how rapidly the city's urban topography is becoming a monument to new forms of 'accumulation by [older forms of] dispossession...It is neither historical coincidence nor ahistorical anomaly that the land and business owners in this area are white and that the wage labourers who provide service support (to the private and public sectors) are black of all shades. This phenomenon is in keeping with the logic of Cape Town's development as a modern colonial, apartheid city and as a hub of economic opportunities that have arisen through economic policies consistent with currently dominant global, neoliberal models (ibid, p. 213).

I draw on the work of Grunebaum in chapter three especially, but also in chapter six.

Finally, Shepherd and Ernssten's collaborative essay 'The world below: post-apartheid urban imaginaries and the bones of the Prestwich Street dead' (2007) explores a metaphor of the city's underneath, the 'world below', first in relation to Johannesburg, and then in relation to surfacing of the Prestwich Street dead.

The shafts and tunnels, the army of labour that disappears into the earth and is disgorged at shift's end, constitute a world within a world, a world beneath, but also a foundational world, a reminder of the reality of sweat and toil. If capital achieves its **surface apotheosis in the airy fantasy of skyscrapers and shopping malls, then its** grounding reality (its deeper reality) remains the sweated labour of the workers on the darkened stopes...Like all cities Cape Town exists as a palimpsest, a layering of successive horizons and events. To dig down from the surface is to encounter wall footings, occupation floors, the debris of past societies, the remains of the dead themselves. This is the world underneath, not as the working world of the mine, but as the stratified world of the archaeologist (ibid, p. 216-7).

As two key commentators on the Prestwich Street contestations, I draw on this work by Shepherd and Ernsten as a key point of reference throughout this mini-dissertation.

2.2 An instrumentalist literature

The second category in the existing literature is a category I have called 'an instrumentalist literature'. If the critical inter-disciplinary literature, the content of which I have sketched above, cuts across disciplines, connects disciplines (or sub-disciplines), traverses disciplines, or, indeed, operates on a meta-level in relation to the discipline itself (as in the case of Shepherd's work and the discipline of archaeology), but also takes as an implicit point of departure discussions around the meanings of slavery, colonialism, apartheid, the TRC, and notions of the political in general, then the instrumentalist literature is primarily disciplinary and disciplined in nature, on the one hand, and focused primarily on meeting the particular needs, requirements, and objectives as guided by the discipline's broader institutional purpose in the context of the university environment, on the other. It is this body of literature around Prestwich Street that I explore below.

The first collection of work that I would like to consider is contained in a document entitled 'Yes, dead men do tell tales!!', and was compiled by a Faculty of Science doctoral candidate, Jacqui Friedling, as part of the requirements for the David and Elaine Potter Fellowship, a sizeable endowment that is awarded to UCT post-graduate students who have achieved a high level of excellence (Theron 2005, p. 4). The context out of which this document emerges is important as it points to a key factor embedded within the debates over the dead: bursaries, grants, and funding. Thus, if the developer of The Rockwell had made a sizeable overall investment by purchasing the property, and arranging for the design and construction of a new building, then there were also substantial financial interests at play in terms of multiple research and memorialisation agendas. An open seminar was therefore arranged by Friedling in accordance with the requirements of the grant.

The 2005 Potter seminar was composed of five papers, three of which I would like to consider briefly. The first is Alan Morris' (2005a) short reflection entitled 'Dead white men: scientific racism in context'. Morris' subject is the transformation in the discipline of physical anthropology; that is, from the typology and race science

of the 1800s, to the study of human adaptability characteristic of the New Physical Anthropology as introduced by JB Birdsall in the years following the 1951 UNESCO rejection of race categories. Yet, as Morris (2005a, p. 5) argues, public and scholarly perceptions of the discipline have not yet assimilated this transformation. 'Bigoted assumptions about the field remain coloured by the legacy of the dead white scientists of the past [the founding fathers of the discipline], and not enough has been done to show how the field has changed.' Although the discipline of physical anthropology has indeed shifted in its theory and practice over time, I understand that it has failed in at least two key respects; and in this regard Morris's particular defence of the discipline therefore appears somewhat misdirected.

I think the failure of the discipline has not been one of refusal to "transform" itself in the light of new political imperatives, a fact Morris cites in terms of increased enrolments of black students in physical anthropological university courses (2005a, p. 6). In the first place, the failure has been the more-or-less self-conscious elision of the prior question of whether, in particular local African contexts, the scientific study of human remains may be ethically practiced; and, in the second place, the inability of the discipline to demonstrate, overtly, that it has come to terms with the violence and the legacies of its colonial origins and history. I explore these issues in chapter four.

The second work is Antonia Malan's contribution to the seminar, 'Why are we digging up our cemeteries? Historical background to burial grounds in Green Point, Cape Town' (2005). The bulk of this work is historical summation. Malan traces the histories of Green Point burial practices from the 1700s, to the practices of urban redevelopment vis-à-vis the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront during the 1990s. Admittedly, the work reads akin to an archaeological textbook, and moves from one fact to another, one period in the Cape's archaeological timeline, rather than develop any substantial political argument about the kinds of practices that led to the burial, and then exhumation, of the Prestwich Street dead. In an obvious sense, Malan (2005, p. 5) sits on the fence in the debate around the Prestwich Street burial ground when she concludes the paper.

It is in the light of the long record of the often dubious contexts of appropriation and redevelopment in Cape Town that the story of the burial grounds of Green Point merits our attention — and engenders controversy. It appears to some that the remaining burial grounds of Green Point — the traces of Cape Town's ancestors — are yet again being swept away without any concern being given to their value and significance as a permanent, real and symbolic site of past inequities and the possibility of redress. Will history repeat itself?

The idea that the discipline of archaeology functions outside of the social and political contexts in which it is practiced is part of a broader discussion I develop in chapter four.

The third work is Jacqui Friedling's short explication, 'What can we learn from our ancestors?' (2005a), which she begins with an encouraging assertion: 'Human skeletal remains are more than just utilitarian objects of value for scientific research they are also a part of the history and fabric of South African society.' Yet Friedling

develops this argument by drawing predominantly on an international disciplinary literature (see especially p. 4) to assert the importance of physical anthropology in revealing the stories written into the 'humble bone' (p. 1). Friedling suggests three essential categories for scientific observation — stress, growth, lifestyle — the study of each of which corresponds to a series of scientific tests and observations that ostensibly can determine 'what life would have been like in the past' (Friedling 2005a, p. 1) for a particular individual. Once again, there is no sign from this work of the very particular local African contexts in which the discipline operates as discipline, as knowledge; nor a sign of an engagement with questions of what constitutes ethical practice within and outside of the discipline itself — a conception of the relationship between the discipline and society.

The final work that I would like to earmark in this section is Erin Finnegan's masters' dissertation, which was submitted to the UCT Department of Archaeology in 2006. Finnegan's dissertation, 'Buried beyond Buitengracht: interrogating cultural variability in the historic "informal" burial ground of Prestwich Street, Cape Town' (2006), is the 'first analysis of the cultural material' (i) that accompanied the human burial sites uncovered near Prestwich Street. It is important to add here to my summary of key events (see Introduction, p.8) that the SAHRA decision that prohibited the study of the bones of the Prestwich Street dead allowed for the study of the 'cultural remains' (SAHRA 2005a) (see also chapter four). It is therefore first and foremost in the context of this decision that Finnegan's dissertation appears as an addition to the literature. In fact, that Finnegan's dissertation emerges out of the UCT Department of Archaeology, at a specific juncture in the discipline's history, is not insignificant, and is a point to which I return in chapter four.

'Buried beyond Buitengracht' is an impressive and to an extent exhaustive work of historical archaeology that draws on a wide range of historical sources: maps, the material remains of the dead, and a diverse and international comparative secondary literature. However, the central assumptions upon which the work is based and in particular the case Finnegan makes for an archaeology of disclosure (as opposed, for example, to an archaeology of 'closure, secrecy, or silence') at 39 Prestwich Street (Shepherd 2007, p. 21), I understand to be problematic and therefore worthy of further interrogation. I explore a series of objections to the work in chapter four.

Conclusion: a critical inter-disciplinary hermeneutics

In a presentation to humanities graduate students in 2007 on research methodologies, held at the UCT Centre for African Studies, a Brown University Visiting Professor, Anthony Bagues, encouraged students to consider carefully the following key questions over the course of their researches. 'What does it mean to think and work critically about the human as the object and subject of study? What does it mean to study a human, who, historically, is not supposed to be a human?' (Bagues 2007b). During the opening session of the Centre's Workshop on the subject of African and

African Diasporic Knowledges, held at UCT in October 2006, Bogues argued for what he termed a notion of 'epistemic decolonisation' of past and present knowledges of the world's human populations.²⁴ Bogues' main assertion, in this regard, was that students and scholars need to radically interrogate, to actively decolonise, the foundations upon which their produced knowledge, as well as their received knowledge, exists as knowledge. The point is a marked one in the context of this literature review and this mini-dissertation as a whole, as I think it invites commentators, researchers, scholars of the Prestwich Street dead, to ask the above-cited questions, and to take seriously their implications in the framing of the objects, and subjects, of their enquires.

I would like, therefore, to insert my intervention in the body of research around Prestwich Street into the category of literature that I have termed a 'critical inter-disciplinary literature'. In particular, I understand this work to be a contribution to a critical inter-disciplinary hermeneutics of Prestwich Street insofar as it attempts, through an epistemic reading of the Prestwich Street archive, to lay open a series of possible questions about the different ways in which the city's pasts, presents, and futures are imagined and contested by its citizens, its stewards, its scholars, and its entrepreneurs, in the post-apartheid public sphere; and, then, what these possibilities mean for the city, for knowledge, for the dead themselves. As for the notion of the inter-disciplinary: part historical, part analytical, this mini-dissertation is located at the unique intersection of heritage studies, history, post-colonial public archaeology, city studies, post-apartheid cultural studies, science and technology studies, literary studies, philosophy, and African studies.

²⁴ See Bogues (2007a).

Chapter 3

The language of development

Introduction

For many who were forced from their lands and properties in the central city and removed to the Cape flats, the bones were evidence of what they had suspected: the city was built over the graves of slave ancestors, and its constituted construction represented an architecture of erasure, a concrete covering over of the material traces of memory. As a woman at the first public meeting explained: 'We grew up with haunted places; we lived on haunted ground. We knew there were burial grounds there' (Grunebaum 2007, p. 213).

The city of Cape Town has an admittedly dark and violent past that, as Grunebaum rightly points out, has since been overlaid and to a great extent forgotten by the glitz, razzmatazz, and ersatz of its present. In the years after the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck and the VOC at the Cape (1652), one of its coastal areas, Green Point, was located outside of the then emerging settlement's western perimeter, and was the designated site ('Gallows Hill') for the punishment and torture of criminals. From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, Green Point also became the place of many of the first colonial burial sites (Cox, et. al 2001), a fact that is causing increasing anxiety in and among circles of property developers, city proprietors, heritage councillors, business owners, and city residents, as the secrets of the world below surface unexpectedly to disrupt the city's political and urban (re)developmental economies. This chapter is about one such disruption, on site near Prestwich Street, and some of the key utterances and actions of the developer of The Rockwell that followed in its wake. It is also, however, about The Rockwell itself as an architectural intervention on the post-apartheid landscape and in particular about its un-relation to the site of this disruption.

3.1 Context

Plans for the redevelopment of Prestwich Place were already in motion as early as 2001. At that stage, a relatively short phase of construction work was scheduled to take place in a period of seven months, between 1 March and 30 September 2003. On 4 June 2001, a 'rough sketch plan' (Malan 2003, p. 3) of the development was submitted to the City of Cape Town (CCT) for its approval. In its assessment of the

proposals, the plan, and the site itself, the Council's Urban Conservation Unit (UCU) recommended the total demolition of any existing structures on the erven. This recommendation was made on the basis of a conservation study of Green Point and Sea Point conducted by Derek Japha and others in the late 1980s to determine the area's heritage significance (Ernsten 2006, p. 58).

In a letter from Prestwich Place architect, Michael Philippides, to project manager acting on the behalf of developer Ari Efstathiou (of Styleprops Ltd.), Andre van der Merwe, Philippides reported the Council's appraisal that the existing buildings had 'no architectural heritage' and that the block upon which the buildings stood 'was not in a conservation area' (Philippides 2001; Ernsten 2006, p. 36). To add to the irony and the incorrectness of the Council's assessment of the site, a soil assessment by a specialist soil testing company, Rosond Cape (Pty) Limited, did not detect any skeletal or cultural material in the earth; but, rather, only a combination of cement, shale, rock and 'sea shells' (Rosond Cape (Pty) Ltd. 2003, p. 17; Ernsten 2006, *ibid*). On the basis of these evaluations, final approval for the demolition of the buildings standing on the site was granted by the director of Planning and Development to Styleprops Ltd. by Council on 30 April 2003 (CCT 2003).

On 16 May, approximately two weeks after demolition approval was granted, human remains were uncovered by demolition personnel on the site of the PPRP. As a result, Efstathiou and his team were placed in the position of facing up to an outcome on site that ran contrary to prior development planning. Moreover, the immediacy of the situation for the development team was heightened by early archaeological conjectures that a full-scale burial site may potentially lie beneath the property's surfaces (Leslie 2003). Development work was halted in accordance with the legal requirements of the NHRA, and the ACO and CSRF respectively were contracted by the development team to begin the first exhumations, as well as the statutory public consultation and notification processes.

3.2 Analysis

Of the three public meetings that were organised for the purposes of public notification and consultation, two were organised by the CSRF in conjunction with Efstathiou. (The third was organised by SAHRA.) The first of the three meetings was held at St. Stephen's Church, in Riebeeck Square, central Cape Town, on 29 July. Proceedings at the church once designated for use by baptised slaves began at 16h30. More than one hundred people attended the meeting, and were present in various capacities.²⁵ A panel appointed by the CSRF was constituted by ACO archaeologist

²⁵ The facilitator for the meeting was Marlene Leros who was called in as an independent facilitator from the organisation Sustainability Matters. Members of the CSRF, Noeleen Murray and Auwais Rafoudeen, were also present at the meeting as rapporteurs to assist Laros and Malan. Representatives from the press, the City Council, and additional SAHRA representatives were present at the meeting.

Tim Hart; University of Western Cape historian and, at the time, SAHRA representative Ciraj Rassool; Efstathiou and van der Merwe; architect Lucien Le Grange; archaeologist Judith Sealy of the Archaeology Special Focus Reference Group (constituted to advise the heritage managers); and SAHRA representatives, Pumla Madiba, Mary Leslie and David Hart (Malan 2003). Each of the panellists made a short presentation to the floor, the contents of each of which immediately reflected the different interests at play vis-à-vis the events of 16 May and, more specifically, the exhumations that had begun some seven weeks earlier (see chapter four).

Efstathiou began his address to the audience with a statement of his ambivalence in respect of the graves on the site of the PPRP. It is possible from the records of the meeting — the video recording and written transcript — to read the meeting's atmosphere, and the particular moment in which this statement was uttered. Anxiety, trepidation, and a sense of moral uncertainty prevailed as Efstathiou began.

I am not sure whether I should be excited or disappointed...I spent six weeks extremely excited on site. We have given our total backing to make sure that we will do whatever is necessary on our side to exhume or do whatever is right with regards to the remains that we found.. We trust that it is going to come to an end as quick as possible and we can continue with our job, which is developing the property (Thulani 2003).

The NHRA specifies that in the event of the discovery of the a burial site of national significance on private property, the primary responsibility for the burial site in terms of any cost lies with the owner of the property (NHRA 1999, p. 61-62). The financial implications for Efstathiou were at an early stage in the process unclear because the extent of the burial site and its remains was not known precisely by historians, archaeologists, the provincial heritage authorities (the HRS) or SAHRA. However, as knowledge of the burial site was garnered from archival sources and the ACO' s test excavations (see chapter four), the monetary costs to Efstathiou began to escalate. The financial burden fell entirely on Efstathiou, who was compelled to pay for both the archaeological excavations and the statutory public consultation process. He spoke openly of the frustration of this positionality to *Style* journalist, Hilary Prendini Toffoll.

The worst was not knowing when or how it would end.. There was no way out. You couldn't sell. You just had to keep on paying. What kept me going was the positive feedback I got from everyone about how I was handling it (Toffoll 2004, p. 32).

Efstathiou asserted a moral righteousness in respect of how to best proceed with the burial site when faced with the knowledge of its presence.

Since there had been buildings there already, I didn't believe it was our responsibility. But I said 'Let's do the right thing' (ibid, p. 32).

The sub-texts of all these statements are structured by notions of pragmatism, necessity, and gaining the moral high-ground. In this regard, the two key points to be made are: one, the manner in which Efstathiou emphasised the 'total backing' of the development team; and two, how powerfully continued development activity on site figures as the reason for a solution to be found 'as quick as possible'. Development was thus represented as a non-negotiable, despite any alternative significances of the development site itself to a broader Cape Town public.

Efstathiou's statements, and the silences and voids which lie between and beneath his words, I think reflected not only a sense of his consternation, understandable as this was, but also a sense of impatience. In an interview with a journalist of *Business Day*, Efstathiou was reported to have said how it was 'unfair' that he had been 'caught up in something done three hundred years ago' (van Grass 2003). His statements I think also reflected a lack of his comprehension of the intrinsic significance of the burial site itself to the marginalised communities of the Cape, past and present, who themselves experienced and were made subject to various practices of erasure during the colonial and apartheid period, a fact the exhumations signified.

Thus, although Efstathiou and project manager van der Merwe presented a sympathetic rhetorical front in respect of the later claims of the Hands Off Committee (see especially, SAHRA 2003f, p. 13), and to their credit followed the correct legal processes at all times, the development team were evidently unwilling to forfeit the land or the total end value of the development to the South African heritage authorities. The team solicited the services of Bridget Rubenstein, a lawyer from one of Cape Town's commercial law firms, Cliffe Dekker, as well as John Milton Sellignon QC and Andre la Grange QC, to attend to their interests during the appeal processes (see also chapter six). All outcomes of the legal processes stood in favour of Efstathiou.

As such, it is indeed the case that the *actual* front the development team adopted was one of defend the development at all costs, as opposed to doing 'whatever is right with regards to the remains'.

In an interview Toffoll, whose article 'A Grave Matter' (*Style*, December 2004) represents Efstathiou as the victim of an unfortunate circumstance, Efstathiou is reported to have affirmed his handling of the matter.

Religiously I feel comfortable with how we handled it.. I would never have been able to live with myself if I'd just brought in a bulldozer. The money I've lost is not a huge issue. But I do need to finish what I started. I've stumbled on to something very important as this discovery is an area where the history of the people of Cape Town can be traced and documented. So I say 'Let's put it to good account. Let's make six or seven blocks a historical conservation area' (Toffoll 2004, p. 32).

Efstathiou's subjective invocations of notions of religiosity and conscience are both significant; as is his downplaying of the financial loss and the emphasis he places on recapturing the area as an 'historical conservation area'. I think the underlying

interests at play, in this particular statement, are evident insofar as an historical conservation area would serve to further increase the property value of The Rockwell, rather than contribute to the development of local public histories of 'the people of Cape Town'. Indeed, the very design of the building, The Rockwell, that would stand in place of the Prestwich Street burial ground, is evidence enough of the contradiction.

The website and advertising brochure for The Rockwell are themselves useful primary texts for exploring the discourse of development in the context of the building's architectural history; its place in Cape Town's property market; and its global semiotics (see also Shepherd 2007 and Shepherd and Ernsten 2007 for critical analysis of this text).

The point to be made about the development as a whole is that the bones of the Prestwich Street dead, or the original site of their interment, does not at all get figured in the design and conceptualisation of The Rockwell. A series of photographs posted on the website visually documenting the course of the development of the building does not include any photographs of the events that preceded the laying of The Rockwell's foundations. The histories of the site are instead replaced by an historical simulacrum — a history of which there is a copy, The Rockwell, but no original — in what I think can be described as an attempt to forget, to discard, to dis-member the messy colonial past in lieu of a clean, stylized future. Furthermore this simulated history is based not on a local history rooted in local experience, but instead finds its genesis in the 1920s North American history of the New York Jazz Age, a period in which they 'did design right' with 'rock and soul' (The Rockwell 2008).

In the early 1900's they realized something fundamental. They realized that rock and steel alone is not good enough. A building of rock and steel is good. It is solid. But rock, without soul, is just rock. (ibid)

Priced between R950 000 and R3 5 million, The Rockwell's apartments are 'situated in trendy De Waterkant...close to world-class restaurants, theatres, delis, fitness centres etc.' and furnished with 'spectacular views of Table Mountain and the Atlantic Ocean' (ibid). The sub-text is neo-colonial.

The Rockwell one of the most desirable addresses in Cape Town. Because it is designed around open spaces. Because it portrays strength in its individuality. Because it is a mix of old-school character and modern free-thought... Voted as one of the top three tourist destinations in the world, Cape Town has it all. The iconic Table Mountain. Two oceans. White beaches. Fynbos. Ocean drives, wine farms, first-world service, Mediterranean climate, vibrant nightlife, and a relaxed outlook on life. Local and foreign investors are looking towards Cape Town, because it is the next big thing. And as the next big thing, property in this highly lucrative market is becoming more exclusive. The demand for world-class apartments is on the increase (ibid).

3.3 Discussion

South Africa's sustained economic boom since 1994 has not been without debate or controversy. On the one hand, the economic agenda adopted by the new, and incumbent, government goes hand-in-hand with the demands of globalisation, the terms of which are still dictated in large part by the global North. On the other hand, the promises and dreams of post-apartheid democracy — articulated in terms of reconstruction, development, growth, employment, and redistribution — have arguably not been fulfilled for the majority of South Africans. Thus, as much as a positive economic growth rate, exemplified in a generally rising Gross Domestic Product, has been hailed as a defining feature of the post-1994 dispensation, the manner in which this "growth" has come about is neither uncontested nor as encouraging as it may appear at first glance. The limits to liberation after apartheid (Robins 2005, p. 1) — and there are many — pose considerable everyday challenges to key government policy-makers and figureheads, as well as citizens of the new nation.

The purpose of a general explication of this nature is to bring to our attention an important tension that cuts to the heart of the Prestwich Street contestations; that is the tension between heritage, on the one hand, and development, on the other. If multi-million Rand development projects, like The Rockwell, fit neatly into the ANC-led coalition government's strategy for stimulating national economic growth, and likewise into the City of Cape Town's local City-Improvement District strategies for local economic expansion,²⁶ then the bones of the Prestwich Street dead could not have arrived at a more inconvenient moment in this particular context. However, it is precisely the meanings and implications of the phrase 'particular context' that we must take seriously if we are to understand development discourse viz. The Rockwell and the remains of the Prestwich Street dead.

A wave of critical writing over the past fifteen years has demonstrated how South African urban redevelopment projects have erased or, conversely, simulated South African and African pasts as a means to construct leisure and entertainment environments at the expense of local histories (Worden 1994; Hall 1995; Mbembe 2004; Marks 2006; Hall and Bombardella 2005; Hall and Bombardella 2007). Worden took the lead, in this regard, in his seminal paper presented to the 1992 History Workshop conference — Myths, Monuments and Museums — entitled 'Unwrapping history at the Cape Town waterfront'.²⁷ In this paper Worden (1994, p. 44) analyses the manner in which an image of the waterfront was stylized by its developers — following years of isolationist, protectionist apartheid city planning and engineering — in the early 1990s in terms of a 'return to the sea' and a nostalgic, white Cape colonial identity. Yet, as Worden writes, 'To be effective in presenting a desirable past, nostalgia has to call on actual memories and suppress others' (ibid). The suppressed memories and histories in this case belong to the Coloured and African working classes, whose presence in the construction and development of the waterfront over

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time has only recently begun to be recognised by its proprietors, if in a limited fashion.

If 'reflective nostalgia' (Hall and Bombardella 2007, p. 256) — nostalgia based on a longing for that which is always beyond reach — and even desire, are two key words structuring the discourse and practice of Cape Town's waterfront, then they have also structured the praxis of developments elsewhere in South Africa — GrandWest Casino in Cape Town, Century City, the Lost City in the former homeland of Bophuthatswana, and Montecasino and Melrose Arch in Johannesburg. In these entertainment or residential complexes, local and global histories, or even European mythical histories of Africa, have been appropriated by entrepreneurs with a flare for the special aesthetic and experiential quality "the past" brings to their developments. Take, for example, GrandWest Casino with its collection of fake District Six street signs, popular Cape place-names, and the shabbily constructed replica of the Castle of Good Hope (Hall and Bombardella 2005; Marks 2005); or, the Lost City with all of its architectural allusions to Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's mines* and legends of hidden treasure (Hall 1995). At the same time, these new privatised public spaces are themselves sites of prodigious consumption, but also sites of class-based exclusion and omission.

In this sense, then, The Rockwell can be interpreted as one addition to this genre of post-apartheid development based on a reading of its design and conceptualisation. Yet, what of the set of metonymic relations, the actual hidden pasts, that the site of The Rockwell represents?

Historically, during the first period of Dutch rule at the Cape (1652-1795), burials for those who did not form a part of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) took place on the outskirts of the Church's formal cemetery — in informal graveyards. These would have been the burials of a great variety of people: Cape residents, soldiers, deceased ship crew, Cape slaves, victims of the three smallpox epidemics of the 1700s, Khoena, and paupers, among others (Malan 2003). 'Informal yards' Cox and others have suggested, 'were generally the province of the poor, unbaptised, underclass, whether free or not.' (Cox et. al., 2001, p. 80) On the other hand, DRC funerals were performed with a great deal of 'pomp and ceremony' — this would include the services of paid mourners called 'huilebaken' and 'tropslutiers' who would follow in pairs at the rear end of the funeral procession (Botha 1926, p. 64-65) — the eventual burial site of which would cost approximately '50 Cape gulden' (Mentzel 1921, p. 128 quoted in Malan 2003, Appendix, p. 19). However, these, quite other, burials were not always performed out of sense of respect or reverence for the dead. Bodies were often dumped in shallow graves and the site of interment left unmarked. Such was the fate of the poor and unnamed dead at the Cape in the eighteenth century.

This history of erasure of the human being, exemplified in an ethics of disposal in death, did not cease with the colonisation by the British Empire of the Cape, or with the institution of an apartheid government approximately one-hundred-and-fifty years later, in 1948. Indeed, the vicissitudes of this history of erasure can be seen to

play out in the post-apartheid city in and through different forms and dimensions (see, for example, Mbembe 2004). In this chapter, therefore, I argue that the discourse of development vis-à-vis the development of The Rockwell and in particular the its architectural conceptualisation and design, as well as the development team's response to the presence of the human remains on site, can be thought of in terms of a series of profound continuities with this history of erasure and its ethics of disposal. As such, I would like to suggest that the guiding forces giving shape to the frontier vis-a-vis the discourse of development can be characterised as the *forces of erasure*.

In the early 1800s, not long after British soldiers occupied the Cape for the second time, the land upon which The Rockwell now stands was transformed from a place of burial for the colonial underclasses into commercial property (Malan 2003, Appendix, p. 21).²⁸ That there were thousands of shallowly and irregularly interred human bodies beneath the earth of this 'Waste Ground' (ibid) was, at the time, an inconsequential fact to the British Colonial Office. Foundations for new buildings on site were simply dug 'through the graves' (Hart 2003, p. 3), and the burial site self-consciously forgotten during the course of construction. A plan published in 1833 indicates that the site of The Rockwell — at that stage valued at 30 pounds sterling (Malan 2003, Appendix, p. 21) — was owned and managed commercially by Collison and Company, 'a firm of wine merchants with an extensive distillery' (Loos, 2003). This covering over of the remains of the dead, and the use of a site of burial for the purposes of commercial activity, is the first act of erasure. As PPC member, Yazir Henri, noted, 'the land was sold without memory' (SAHRA 2003f, p.12).

During the apartheid years (1948-1994), Green Point and neighbouring Sea Point were two of many sites of forced removals that formed a part of a massive national campaign to engineer the South African rural and urban landscapes along racial lines (see Field 2001). With passing of the Group Areas Act in 1950,²⁹ thousands of Cape Town's city residents were forcibly moved from their homes in heart of the city to land many kilometres outside, to the Cape Flats. The act of destruction of thousands of communities and their homes and living landscapes, as a direct result of apartheid forced removals — including residents of District One — was the second act of erasure.

In a contemporary context of urban redevelopment, Green Point is a rapidly gentrifying inner city zone (Shepherd 2007). Situated in close proximity to Cape Town's Victoria and Alfred Waterfront — itself an essential indicator of the rapid globalisation of Cape Town's city space — the global city space of Green Point is a signifier of the wealth of South African citizens and foreigners alike. With its chain of neon-lit bars, European-styled café's, and timeless grill rooms, Somerset Road itself is fast becoming the next "big thing" in Cape Town's experiential economy (Hall and

²⁸ The first property on this particular tract of land was sold to James Morton in 1827 (SAHRA 2002). The site of The Rockwell (erven 4721 and 167710 consolidated), which lies due west of the former VOC burial ground, spans an area of approximately one thousand square-metres and is bordered by Prestwich, Napier, Schiebe, and Alfred Streets.

²⁹ District One was declared a white group area in 1965 (Malan 2003, p. 24).

Bombardella 2005). Thus the third, and final, act of erasure is evident in the stylization of The Rockwell, and of the broader Green Point area, the contemporary character of which bears little resemblance to its troubling histories. As Shepherd and Ernsten (2007, p. 227) have argued, "The full force of the notion of "forced removals" — a phrase used by the [Hands Off Committee] to describe the exhumation and relocation of the Prestwich Street dead — strikes home. It is as though history, memory, every rooted association between a group of people and a site on the landscape is evacuated, pulled up at the roots, to be replaced by a copywriter's whimsy'

Conclusion

In this chapter I explore the discourse of development in the context of the surfacing of the Prestwich Street dead on its current site, and the erection of The Rockwell. My argument in this chapter is that the defensive response of the developer, which was ultimately to effect the completion of The Rockwell, can be thought of in terms of the forces of erasure, a series of self-conscious actions over time to cover over, or remove, the presence of local communities and their histories from the landscape. The forces of erasure in the context of the development of The Rockwell are in turn given impulse by the forces of globalisation, whose power itself is fuelled by the large economic and financial interests present in the redevelopment of urban suburbs such as Green Point. I think that as much as it is possible to argue the case for the development of The Rockwell in crudely economic terms, the reality remains that the meaning and value of the Prestwich Street burial site was articulated by the development team in monetary terms, in time-delays, legal procedure, and in terms of 'developing the site'. What, then, of the other knowledges, the other discourses, at play around the contested site?

Chapter 4

The language of archaeology, the language of science

Introduction

The bigger the material mass, the more easily it entraps us: mass graves and pyramids bring history closer while they make us feel small. A castle, a fort, a battlefield, a church, all these things bigger than we that we infuse with the reality of past lives, seem to speak of an immensity of which we know little except that we are part of it. Too solid to be unmarked, too conspicuous to be candid, they embody the ambiguities of history. They give us the power to touch it, but not that to hold it firmly in our hands — hence the mystery of their battered walls. We suspect that their concreteness hides secrets so deep that no revelation may fully dissipate their silences. We imagine the lives under the mortar, but how do we recognize the end of a bottomless silence? (Trouillot 1995, p. 29-30)

In my epigraph for this chapter we can almost hear the sounds of Trouillot's discomfort as he grapples with the meaning of the past's materiality as it appears to the observer in the present. The remnants of our past — castles, forts, battlefields, mass graves — resist comprehension because of their 'immensity'. They speak to times past, a history 'of which we know little except that we are part of it'. Yet, how do we fathom the immensity of the past if we can only but 'touch' its fragments and not hold them 'firmly in our hands'? Can we ever locate the point at which history's silences begin, and end? Rhetorically, Trouillot seems to think not; yet perhaps the very materiality of the past urges us to that act of fathoming, to that will to comprehend and transform the silence, and to find meaning in the mystery so that it ceases to puzzle us. I would like to suggest, as an opening position for this chapter, that the kind of comprehension and transformation Trouillot alludes to in this passage may indeed come *with* the silence. Perhaps recognising the need to fathom, to know, to hold the past firmly in our hands, is the very point which may be compelled — ethically, spiritually — to accept the silence, the emptiness, the voids. Perhaps the past just is, and does not (indeed, ought not) live in the present as we are so accustomed to think. Or, if not, then it lives on in another, different dimension...

This chapter has three parts, all of which concern how the Prestwich Street site and remains were thought of, understood, and interpreted in the languages of archaeology and science, following the moment of their surfacing. In the first place, I explore the language of archaeology in relation to the various processes accompanying the actual exhumation of the remains. In the second place, I explore

the language of science — particularly, the discourse of physical anthropology — in the context of the debate about whether the human remains uncovered near Prestwich Street ought, or ought not, be the subject of forensic anatomical investigation. My general argument, in the third place, is that the dominant discourses of archaeology and physical anthropology are both articulated from within the same positivist 'paradigm of discovery' (Rassool 2005), which functioned with a limited conception, if indeed any at all, of other, competing, forms of archaeological (post-processual, non-positivist, post-colonial) and scientific epistemologies and praxes.

If the language of development empowered what I called in chapter three 'the forces of erasure', then in this chapter I suggest that the languages of archaeology and science aimed to empower — in both different and similar ways — the *forces of exposure*. These languages gained an especially powerful currency during the course of the exhumations, and the debates that ensued, and were given further credence by written letters of support from prominent members of the UCT academic and leadership communities, including current Deputy Vice-Chancellor Cheryl de la Rey (Nasson 2005; de la Rey 2005; Smith and van der Merwe 2005).

4.1 The language of archaeology

Archaeology intervenes

'The semantics of a discipline' Shepherd (2002b, p. 142) has argued, 'are as good a guide as any to its politics and its practices.' In this first section I explore the meanings and implications of a number of key statements made by various archaeologists subsequent to the surfacing of human remains on site near Prestwich Street. A clear demonstration of the extent to which certain key exclusions — exclusions, that is, of alternative ways of knowing — were brought into being by a particular version of archaeological knowledge (theory) and praxis (practice) articulated in the public sphere is my aim in this opening discussion. I begin, in my timeline of key events (see Introduction, p. 8), two weeks post-May 16.

On 2 June chief archaeologist of SAHRA, Mary Leslie, contacted Andre van der Merwe via email following an on-site discussion (Leslie 2003a). In contradistinction to the Council's assessment of the conservation value of the site and its buildings (see chapter three), Leslie informed van der Merwe that the 'entire area is known to be sensitive, as there were old burial grounds in the vicinity' (ibid). That the Council's assessment may then have been as far off the mark as it was, cannot now be considered a simple procedural or administrative error. In 1995, a series of exhumations were performed on a site at nearby Cobern Street, when a burial ground of a more-or-less similar nature to that near Prestwich Street was uncovered in 1994 (Appollonio 1998; Cox 1999; Cox et. al., 2001). If the Prestwich Street burial site was

not "known" then it was a selective unknowing, and not entirely innocent or untainted.

Leslie also notified van der Merwe of a number of locally-based archaeologists, who had experience with colonial-era excavations, and who would be of the required competence to perform any exhumations on site. Competence, in this instance, meant those archaeologists 'accredited by the South African Archaeological Association' (Leslie 2003b), one the discipline's professional bodies.

Leslie then added the following statement, the resonances of which underscore the extent to which, at an early stage in what ought to have been a public process in terms- of the NHRA, the methodologies of a particular version of archaeological investigation were drawn upon in thinking through a timely solution to what was then understood to be an escalating crisis — an 'emergency situation' (Malan 2003, p. 4) — for the developer.³⁰ 'The archaeologist will advise about the need for basic curation, boxing and analysis and it is important that time and, ideally, funding be allowed before re-interment for a scientific forensic level descriptive analysis of the material' (ibid; see also Ernsten 2006, p. 37). Moreover, 'The archaeologists will need to assess the appropriate action in terms of the human remains and discuss this with SAHRA' (ibid).

In another letter to van der Merwe, written one week after that which I cite above, Leslie wrote that the 'SAHRA staff and permit committee members that have been consulted are of the opinion that the most appropriate thing to do would be to have a crypt on the site for the re-interment of the remains, once they have been studied' (SAHRA 2003a). It is also in this letter that we learn of the need for some of the remains to be 'rescued' with fears of development activity threatening to inflict damage on the remains situated on the southern side of the site. The emerging script is thus one which bears two images of the remains: one, as a research opportunity in jeopardy; and, two, as a bather to development activity.

In the passages of these letters we discover 'the archaeologists' and the discipline of archaeology beginning to occupy the centre stage through a series of interventions by key members of the discipline's local Cape Town fraternity (Mary Leslie as one such figure, Janette Deacon, head of the SAHRA Permit Committee, as another). This was a position that those archaeologists who performed the exhumations would occupy at least until the first public meeting on 29 July, when various individual and collective interests began to contest the exhumations, the heritage management of the site and its remains, and the scientific research process as given (see chapter six on the emergence of the Hands Off Committee). Moreover, it is in these passages that we read evidence of at least two noteworthy exclusions in the making.

³⁰ Shepherd (2007, p. 10) has noted that at 'the time of commencement of construction R21 million worth of sales contracts had been concluded, and were at risk due to the delay.' The financial interests at play would determine much of the outcome in this particular instance, which itself is an indication of the very real tension between heritage and development in inner city Cape Town.

In the first place, no mention is made of any preliminary engagement or discussion with religious groups or community representatives of the 'appropriate action' to be taken 'in terms of the human remains'. Responsibility for the remains and the site is all-too-easily assumed to fall into the hands of a small and limited cluster of experts — archaeologists, heritage managers, and the development team. Using the formulation of Ciraj Rassool, Shepherd (2007, p. 15) has written of the 'archaeologising' of the research process around Prestwich Street' as 'the extent to which the problem was framed as an archaeological one, to the exclusion of other methodologies and forms of investigation, notably social history and oral history'. In the second place, no mention is made of an alternative scripting for the process; that is, an alternative set of protocols, practices, and rituals to adhere to in deciding on the fate of the dead.

The fact that international ethical codes, such as the Vermilion Accord, the WAC First Code of Ethics, and the International Council of Museums' Code of Ethics did not enter into public discussions is a point that has been stressed by both Shepherd (2007) and Ernsten (2006). Shepherd (2008 pers. comm., 7 February) has also made the point that broader global disciplinary discussions and debates in respect of the treatment of human remains did not enter forcefully into the dominant archaeological discourse around Prestwich Street. These would include debates in North America around the terms and implementation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) (Mihesuah 2000; Barkan and Bush 2002); debates in Australia around the rights of protection of aboriginal cultural heritage (McBryde 1985; McNiven and Russell 2005); and, more broadly, the global activities of the World Archaeological Congress (WAC).

Instead, an already-decided-upon script of exhumation and re-internment in a crypt for the purposes of future scientific study formed the guideline for action.³¹ This script, I would like to suggest, is rooted in an historic conjuncture between the disciplines of archaeology and physical anthropology, whereby disinterred human remains vis-à-vis the archaeologists are studied by physical anthropologists. I return to a discussion of this relationship of mutual benefit in the third part of this chapter.

Soon after the correspondence between Leslie and van der Merwe, the development team approached archaeologists from the Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO), a contract archaeology unit based at the University of Cape Town. The ACO was established in 1987 to provide a source of professional archaeologists to both the public and private sector in the event of a discovery of objects or sites of heritage significance during the course of development (ACO 2007). Contract archaeology in South Africa represents an offshoot of the discipline of archaeology (Hall 1989; Shepherd 1998), with a mission that is unambiguous. 'Unlike academic archaeologists, who are able to frame research programmes based on their particular

³¹ Leslie (2003) made the following assessment, 'Reburial is preferred and it may be that a crypt could be included in the basement perimeter into which the material could be placed after study. Otherwise an appropriate resting place needs to be arranged with the authorities'. (See also Ernsten 2006, p. 37)

interests and expertise, contract archaeologists must go where there is a need for their services' (Halkett, Hart and Malan 2004, p. 4).

Archaeology on site

A team of archaeologists, consisting of full-time ACO employees and, notably, a number of foreign 'but very experienced' post-graduate students hired on a part-time basis, as well as non-expert assistants, were led onto the 'major archaeological site' (ACO 2003, p. 1) by Hart and David Halkett on 9 June to perform a series of test excavations. This process was followed by a statement by Hart who presented his diagnosis of 'this problem' (ibid) and an immediate course of action. 'Regrettably', he began a letter to Andre van der Merwe —

Prestwich Place is a major archaeological site and will require a great deal of work before development can continue, which we realize is a heavy burden for the developer. We will endeavour to resolve this problem as speedily as possible using best possible archaeological practise (sic), should you decide to appoint the ACO team for the excavation (ibid).

At an estimated cost of approximately R200 000 (ibid), and with the official backing of the UCT's office of Research and Innovation, the ACO's team began the first formal excavations on 11 June, approximately three weeks after the first surfacing of human remains. For this purpose, a permit (No. 80/03/06/001/51) was granted by the SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology, Meteorites, Objects and Burial Grounds Permit Committee (hereinafter 'the SAHRA Permit Committee'), notably for a 'rescue exhumation of human skeletal remains' (SAHRA 2003b) (see also chapter five). The exhumed human remains were stored in boxes inside Napier House, a warehouse adjacent to the site. A key condition of the permit was that all 'field notes and records must be curated at the University of Cape Town' (ibid).

The notion of a rescue exhumation requires further qualification and explanation. The ostensible reason why a permit was granted as hastily as it was, and was granted specifically as a rescue permit, was because of the fears of the SAHRA Permit Committee that the Cape winter rains would literally 'wash [the] bones down the street' (Rassool 2006). Thus, by the removal, the rescue, of the remains from the site, it was understood that archaeologists and heritage managers would be engaged in an act of care and preservation, as opposed to the act of desecration, grave robbing (Malan 2003, p. 6), and destruction that many would call it during and after the fact. It has been suggested that another available option to SAHRA, a common practice in Cultural Resources Management (CRM), would have been to secure the site with a layer of plastic covered by building sand, as well as to secure its perimeters, until due public notification and consultation had taken its course. Why this was not tabled publicly as an option before exhumation remains a question. Moreover, that the actions of the Permit Committee, in this regard, coincided with the interests of the developer is an issue that requires further detailed investigation.

Archaeology on the podium

At the first public meeting on 29 July at St. Stephen's, ACO chief representative, Tim Hart, addressed the audience as part of the series of panellist presentations. By that point, 321 articulate skeletons and approximately 150 inarticulate skeletons had been exhumed from site (Gosling 2003b). He immediately invoked the language and register of archaeology when he said that 'from an anthropological and archaeological point of view we think that the find is quite exciting because there is a lot of history that can be determined; we can actually get down to some amazing detail about people's lives' (Thulani 2003). Twelve days prior, Hart was reported by a *Cape Times* journalist to have said that 'he hoped to be able to raise funds to pay for a thorough analysis of all the remains '

We would like to have physical anthropologists examine the skeletons and also perhaps do DNA testing. If these people were paupers, their lives were never recorded in the historic literature and the only tangible evidence of their existence is these bones. We can learn a lot about them with thorough analysis' (Gosling 2003a).

Current head of the University of Cape Town archaeology department, Judith Sealy, made a noteworthy claim in what occurred in the context of the meeting as a profoundly controversial presentation.

These skeletons are also — literally — our history, the ordinary people of Cape Town, whose lives are not written in the official documents of the time. They did not leave possessions or archives. If we want to recover their history, then one of the most powerful ways to do so is through the study of their skeletons. Skeletons record the stories of our lives, and careful scientific examination can reveal a great deal: we can find out which skeletons are the remains of people who were immigrants to the Cape, and which are the remains of people who were born locally. We can find out what people looked like, how tall they were, what kinds of foods they ate, what diseases they suffered from, how old they were when they died, and sometimes we can tell why they died. By studying many skeletons, we can build up a picture of a whole society (Malan 2003, Appendix, p. 3).

Sealy used the example of the African Burial Ground (ABG), an African American slave burial ground uncovered in New York in 1991, to demonstrate this argument. However, in this case Sealy also said that 'sadly there was also a lot of confusion and hard feelings because of factions that developed in the work that was being done at the African Burial Ground, and that's a situation that we want to avoid in Cape Town' (Thulani 2003; Ernsten 2006, p. 42).

Sealy's choice of words could not have expressed more clearly one of the key issues facing archaeology in the post-apartheid period: an unwillingness to engage at any level of depth with the social and political contexts in which archaeology as discipline is practiced (Shepherd 1998, 2004). I would go insofar as to argue that it is

precisely factions, hard feelings, confusion, dissent, and the political in general, that the discipline of archaeology must contend with in dealing with the objects of their enquiry, and the various communities of practice that may surround those objects. That Sealy, as one important, and leading, representative of the discipline in South Africa, did not take her presentation time as an opportunity to speak a new archaeological language — a language of memory, identity, apartheid, post-coloniality — but instead spoke in terms of diets, age, disease and 'recovering their history', reflects the extent to which some of the principal advocates of the discipline have failed not only to engage in complex ways with the discipline's history, but also, to engage with their own positionality in relation to this history.

If Sealy failed to demonstrate a critical self-awareness during her presentation, then Hart's fleeting reference to 'the find' as 'quite exciting' gives us a clear idea of what the bones signified in Hart's archaeological imagination. I return to this discussion in the third part of this chapter.

Archaeology as victim

The negative public reaction at the meeting following the panelist presentations reached a climax when Zenzile Khoisan stormed out of the church shouting 'Stop robbing graves! Stop robbing graves!' (Malan 2003, Appendix, p. 6) Another participant at the meeting, Joe Marx, argued: 'Khoisan custom is that the first thing that happens is a price must be paid for disturbing a burial. Here's a figure — 7 million? — that the developer or government pays into a fund to promote customs and language of Khoisan. Close the hole!' (ibid).

In an e-mail titled 'Work continuance — most urgent' dated 30 July, Hart (2003b, p. 1) wrote to van der Merwe and Efstathiou requesting an increase in security measures on site if 'we are to continue work...given what is now proving to be very undesirable circumstances', and 'despite yesterday's meeting (racial slurs and accusations of dishonesty, grave robbers)'. Hart also made a number of suggestions in respect of how to secure the exhumation operations, which included: cordoning off the site to public view; restricting public access; and preparing a portion of the site to 'visibly demonstrate to the I&APs [Interested and Affected Parties] the despicable way in which these people have been buried (sic)' (ibid). Hart also wrote of the urgent need to 'get boxes very fast [so] that they are boxed in a wholesome way to ensure that we cannot be accused of treating them in an undignified fashion'. The letter ends with a complement to the development team for their 'patience' and the 'dignified' way the development team 'have conducted yourselves under the given circumstances' (ibid).

There are a number of observations I would like to explicate at this juncture. The first is the defensive strategy of containment (see also, chapter five) Hart projected in lieu of what he described as the outburst that occurred at the first public meeting. Instead of an attempt to make public the meaningful event that was the

surfacing of the Prestwich Street dead, the approach envisaged by the team was one of closing off the site, containing the threat of desecration, and keeping society at arms length. Moreover, what we notice from Hart's letter is the manner in which the archaeological team assumes the role of the innocent victim of political pressure. Instead of thinking through ways to engage the idea that activities on site were perhaps offensive and even disrespectful to some, and that perhaps there were alternative possibilities for the site at that point in time, the response was one of antagonism and alienation.

Second, the manner in which the remains appeared to Hart — as 'despicable', 'a place of uncomfortable array' — represents one particular interpretation of the burials. This is because if, in Hart's way of knowing, the burials were buried in an undignified fashion, then there is further justification for the exhumation process. Exhumation thus becomes a means of righting the wrongs of the past: of demonstrating how the discipline of archaeology can also be used to correct historical injustices, while at the same time make substantial contributions to knowledge. Of course there were other ways of interpreting the site in its original form based on notions of the discontinuousness and messiness of the past, which I return to in chapter six.

The third observation concerns the notion of the Interested and Affected Party (IAP). This is a key term in the discourse around Prestwich Street that we may associate with the language of heritage resources management (chapter five), and emerges in the debate about Prestwich Street to refer amorphously, ambiguously to a series of individual and group interests without invoking political and cultural affinities or positions. Moreover, it is the case that the IAP, implicitly, is somehow a barrier and external to the kinds of engagements of stakeholders and decision-makers. The IAP is political baggage, extra work; yet, and once removed from the centers of power, the IAP still holds a degree of influence over the outcome of a certain dispute. What of names, titles, particular institutional, organisational, and community histories, theoretical positions, and modes of discourse?

The fourth and final observation relates to the relationship that grew out of the contractual obligations between the archaeological team and the development team. In a matter of public importance, such as the Prestwich Street burial ground, the exclusive relationship between these parties, and the CSRF and SAHRA, existed at the expense of a set of transparent relations between the public — broadly-speaking — and the decision-makers affecting the outcomes on site. What these obligations meant, archaeologically, was that particular disciplinary practices such as exhumation were taken as given, paid for, certified, and non-negotiable, to the exclusion of competing forms of disciplinary practice.

On 11 August, the ACO published its 'Technical Report on Archaeological Excavations at Prestwich Street, Green Point, Cape Town' (ACO 2003b). With the cessation of exhumation activity on site, following the outcomes of the first public meeting, the report reads as the ACO's attempt not only to take stock of archaeological work hitherto, but also, to value the site in archaeological terms. By the date of the report's publication, thirty percent of the site had been excavated,

which meant the exhumation of 343 articulated individuals, as well as a significant amount of undifferentiated human bone (ibid). In this document, the archaeological processes followed during the course of the exhumations is described in the language of objectivity.

The core team consists of experienced excavators, senior students (honours and above) and volunteers. Soil is scraped away until the edge of the grave shaft or a colour change is observed. The shaft is then followed and the remains exposed using small tools, brushes and teaspoons. Each identified individual is assigned a number and details are recorded on specially designed burial record form to capture information about orientation, burial style and visible pathology. The burial is then photographed (digital and analogue) and the position relative to the site (3 dimensions) measured using a Leica TC307 digital total station with infra-red beam. The remains are then lifted, wrapped and packed in plastic bags which are left open so the remains can dry and slowly stabilize. Thereafter the remains will be packed into specially designed cartons, which are currently on order. Interim storage will be at the Department of Archaeology at UCT and Department of Human Biology at UCT (ibid, p. 2).

However, if methodological objectivity was one aim of the ACO, then in my opinion it failed to achieve this in more ways than one. Indeed, the very presence of a particular set of predominantly white, contract, and UCT international student archaeologists, performing a series of excavations tasks, on one of the most contested archaeological sites to emerge in the post-apartheid period, alerts us to something reasonably interesting: a complete lack of awareness, on the part of these archaeologists, of local histories and forms of self-expression and self-styling as mediated by post-colonial landscapes of transition and memory. The following photograph (Figure 3) demonstrates visually the exhumations in operation. See the performative nature of archaeology, the attire, wide-brim hats, the equipment, the spades and trowels in hand; the piles of sand; see the black and white bodies wrestling with the earth to expose the site's "hidden histories".



Figure 3 Archaeologists representing the ACO performing exhumation work on site near Prestwich Street (source: UCT *Monday Paper*).

Exhumation continues

In a press release on 1 September 2003 SAHRA ordered archaeological work to continue on site, 'out of respect for these people whose remains have never been accorded respect in the past' (SAHRA 2003c). The reason given by SAHRA for this action — to remove and re-inter all of the remains — was ostensibly 'influenced by the fact that they were never given a formal burial in the past.' Thus, it was purported by SAHRA, the 'Establishment of a formal burial site will certainly provide a memorial place and a place of remembrance to allow them to rest in peace' (ibid). Archaeological excavations were eventually completed in March 2005.

4.2 The language of science

One of the tropes that proliferates in the various texts of the Prestwich Street archive is the trope of the voice of the bones. We encounter it through phrases such as 'Can these bones speak?' (Weeder and Malan 2004); 'the bones have spoken' (Weeder quoted in Moodie 2003a); 'the bones have begun to speak' (Weeder 2003a) 'the bones cannot talk or sing' (Williams 2003); 'the city's silent ancestors' (Yutar 2004); and, 'If the bones now being unearthed could speak, what would they say?' (Ross 2003). I recently discovered in a letter to Professor I. Mosala of the Department of

Arts and Culture (DAC) from archaeologist, Andrew B. Smith and natural historian, Nikolaas J. van der Merwe, the most outstanding, irreverent usage of this trope.

Having this wonderful sample of Cape Town's earlier population from the recent excavation at Prestwich Place, we are now in a position to allow the bones to "speak". This may well be the first time they will ever have had a "voice", for (although the collection is not homogenous) many of these people were the underclass of Cape Town's population, and most ignored in their lifetime. The descendants of Cape Town's poorer sections should be excited about what we might we might learn from these skeletons (Smith & van der Merwe 2005, p. 1).

I would therefore like to frame the second section of this chapter by posing what I understand to be an essential question, which problematises the uncritical, undifferentiated usage of the metaphors of voice to establish a scientific or political argument. What does it mean 'give voice' to the dead?

A request for permission to conduct physical anthropological analysis on the exhumed bones of the Prestwich Street dead was lodged with SAHRA chief archaeologist, Mary Leslie, on 2 February 2005 by two UCT doctoral students, Jacqui Friedling and Thabang Manyapelo (Friedling, Maanyapelo, & Morris 2005a). With the support of their academic supervisor of the UCT Department of Anatomy, Alan Morris, Friedling and Maanyapelo argued principally for the importance of their proposed research in terms of gaining a 'clearer and more complete picture of our heritage', and an 'opportunity to give voice to our "sidelined" ancestors' (ibid).

In their request they suggested specifically that 'Scientific analysis of the skeletons gives the dead a voice through time, a voice actively smothered during Colonial and (sic) apartheid periods.' Interestingly, Friedling and Maanyapelo were concerned to distance the disinterment of the remains — the archaeological process — from the study of the remains — the physical anthropological process. 'Analysis of the skeletons is neither about excavation nor is it about reburial' they wrote. There is no question that the skeletons should be reburied, both on ethical and moral grounds, but how can we provide proper memorialisation for these people without some knowledge of who they were?' (ibid) With an implicit reference to the position of the Hands Off Committee (see chapter six), they argued the point further when they wrote that 'Much has been said about the Human Right of the dead to rest without disturbance, but it is also a Human Right of the dead to pass their stories on to the living.' As such, the bones of the Prestwich Street dead are 'an opportunity for us as scholars together with the descendant communities to give voice to our past by making use of science.'

There are two points to be made here about Friedling and Maanyapelo's usage of the metaphors of voice. In the first place, there is a peculiar equivocation of the word voice: to 'give the dead a voice through time' directly implies the dead, who were once living people, did not have a voice. This is simply not true in the strictest possible sense: human beings, suffice those who are literally mute, have voices, which are voices that speak, contest, and resist, as small and silent, or large, as they may

be.³² This first meaning of voice, a fictitious voice, we should establish here, is thus not synonymous with the second meaning, which is that which I want to proceed to describe and characterise.

The second meaning of voice refers to a mediating voice — that is, the voice of the researcher, the knower — who constructs knowledge of the dead, based on a particular epistemic (and ontological) orientation, but does not construct the voice of the dead. If this is the case, then the particular conditions under which knowledge of the dead is constructed become important. These would undoubtedly influence the particular kind of knowledge that is constructed — for there are admittedly different ways of knowing the same thing, as demonstrated in my example of Sissy Jupe (chapter one) — as well as the power invested in its construction *and* validation. The critical question then becomes: to what end will that knowledge be a means? In the context of the Prestwich Street contestations, I think, this became one of the decisive questions in the final determination of the success of the Friedling and Maanyapelo's application for permission to study the bones.

Clashing perspectives

Friedling and Maanyapeelo were in turn invited to present their proposals at a meeting organised by SAHRA. It was a meeting filled with clashing perspectives. The meeting was scheduled for 6 April 2005 and was held at the District Six Museum — a noteworthy fact in and of itself. Attendant at the meeting were SAHRA officials, members of the PPPC, as well as members of the UCT Department of Anatomy, including Alan Morris. The researchers, Friedling and Maanyapelo, were invited to present their proposals following which discussion between the attendants proceeded. Friedling began her presentation with the following statement —

Who am I and why am I here? My name is Jacqui Friedling...I am a story teller...I tell the stories of people long gone — our ancestors — my people...I read their life histories locked up in their bones preserved over a lifetime of living... (SAHRA 2005a, p. 2)

Friedling also said this in support of her and Maanyapelo's proposals, 'Give them [the dead] their day in the sun and let them finally tell their stories — albeit through their remains' (ibid, p. 3).

The position of the PPPC, in response, was made clear by remarks from Bonita Bennett and Michael Weeder. Bennett argued that the 'human rights' of the dead far outweighed the rights of researchers who wanted to study the bones, while Weeder made a personal connection to his grandfather who, he recounted, did not tell stories about his past for the very reason that it may have been 'painful or embarrassing'. Weeder then drew the analogy that to invade the grave of his grandfather, to uncover

³² I am grateful to Renate Meyer for pointing out to me the extent to which equivocation of the notion of voice occurs in the context of oral history.

the secrets of his past, would be to invade his privacy — an act demonstrating a lack of respect. To study the bones of the Prestwich Street dead, Weeder argued forcefully, would therefore be disrespectful to the (once living) to whom those bones belong. Zenzile Khoisan (2005) took a similar, if more radical, position on the issue. 'In a sense', he said of the act of scientifically investigating of human remains, 'it can be interpreted as a certain kind of pornographic aspect of necrophilia. It's a way of screwing the corpses after they dead'.

In an open letter 'written immediately after the meeting with the PPPC' Morris (2005a) described how he was 'saddened by the closed minds that [he] met at the District 6 Museum.'

My students approached the [PPPC] not as adversaries, but in an honest attempt to be part of the process of rebuilding our mutual heritage. But right from the start the unsmiling faces sitting around the table spoke without words to tell us that this would not be a meeting of minds and hearts, but a shut door. I know of the emotions expressed at the meeting (we had heard them at the open meetings during the time of the excavation) but what struck me was how the committee members were TWICE victims of Apartheid. Once in the past, but now in their inability to look forward and only dwell as victims of the past. The committee members spoke as if only they had the answers to the problems of Cape Town's historic legacy. Despite the denial, there was no question that science was something from outside the 'community' and that only archival and oral histories were true sources of 'knowledge'.

He continued:

I also detect a real feeling that the committee considers itself to be the 'voice of the people'. But I suspect the reality is that committee represents only itself and a narrow view hardened by bitterness (ibid).

Morris challenged the moral lesson behind Weeder's story of his grandfather with a story of his own, through which he expressed a wish that his own grandfather had shared his life's stories with Morris before his death. 'Nothing will ever make me lose the love and respect I have for my grandfather, but I regret to this day the fact that he did not tell me of my ancestors (ibid).

Morris's rebuttal is interesting for two reasons. First, is the sense in which he demonstrates a lack of understanding of, and an unwillingness to engage at any level of depth with, the position of the PPPC. Although he wrote, 'I know of the emotions expressed at the [first public] meeting', it is evident from his letter that his knowledge of such 'emotions' was limited to his own personal experience, and not necessarily that of members of the PPPC, some of whom have first-hand experience of the oppressions, erasures, and exclusions of South African society. If anything, a tone of judgement of the ostensibly limited perspective of the PPPC prevails in the letter; as opposed to a demonstrating a critical self-reflexivity of his own positionality as a white, male, middle-class Canadian-South African engaged in highly politicised, contested physical anthropological research.

Second, is the defence of the work of his students (Friedling and Maanyapelo); as opposed to the advocacy of his own work and research interests in the Prestwich Street dead. At this point the politics of race, culture, and identity enters into the discussion. Why, and how, is this so?

Jacqui Friedling recorded a summary of her interactions with some of the key players involved in the contestation and management the site and the remains, a document Morris passed on to me during our interview in September 2007. The entries are subjective and partial yet nonetheless edifying in terms of the politicking of the PPPC as a means to block the physical anthropological study of the remains In respect of her first encounter, with Ciraj Rassool, in 2004, Friedling recorded the following entry.

5 Nov. 2004 — Meeting with Ciraj Rassol: said to keep away from the "physical anthropology" label; come across as Anatomists; NB for me to approach the PPC as a "coloured" professional with skills they can use; tell them what I could for them and the importance of this work in the historical sense for "coloured people"; suggested I alone approach the PPC to put forth my case to them; Alan [Morris] must not be involved at all — white male! (Friedling 2005)

Of the meeting at the D6M, Friedling recorded these thoughts.

6 Apr. [2005] — SAHRA sets meeting with members of PPPC at District Six Museum: not an air of welcome in the room — got the impression they were just going through the motions of having us there and that their minds had already been made up!!! .told oral histories are enough — the little information in the archives about the area was enough; told what science had to offer was unacceptable and not needed.. .told we were puppets of our "white supervisor"; asked, 'Where in Africa have we put hands in the grave?' (ibid).

A letter sent from Mary Leslie to the two students on 13 May delineated the position of SAHRA in the wake of the D6M meeting. Leslie wrote of the 'negative' response of the PPPC to Friedling and Maanyapelo's proposals and that, as a result, SAHRA could not 'support this work' (SAHRA 2005c).

Friedling and Maanyapelo responded with a request that SAHRA re-consider the 'short-sighted' decision on the grounds that 'the PPPC is not the only voice claiming ancestry and that their view is from a very small faction of the descendant communities' and that Irleburial of our past without study and acknowledgment is the same as saying we are not part of the past and thus not part of the country' (Friedling and Maanyapelo 2005). The support of Alan Morris followed suit.

As a white academic, I was given the clear impression that my opinion was not needed not wanted by the PPPC delegates [at the D6M meeting] and I intentionally gave the students priority in presentation and debate. They were the ones who initiated contact with the PPPC in good faith with the belief that a fusion of interests between science and descendant communities would be of benefit to all. Statements made by PPPC delegates at the meeting were consistent with their previous statements at various meetings reflected an underlying bias against science that SAHRA seems repeatedly to fail to recognise (Morris 2005b, p. 1).

Morris (2005c, p. 2) urged SAHRA not to engage in the 'DESTRUCTION' of knowledge of the past by mooting the scientific study of the remains.

A number of months later, on 21 September, SAHRA announced its decision to officially prohibit 'basic anatomical research of the human remains exhumed from the Prestwich Place site' (SAHRA 2005a, p. 1). The decision was taken on the basis of the outcomes of a series of individual meetings between SAHRA, scientists (Friedling, Maanyapelo, Morris, among others), religious representatives, representatives from the Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists (ASAPA), the PPPC, and the Working Group for Prestwich Place (SAHRA 2005). The announcement of the decision was met by a wave of competing reactions.

On the one hand, the PPPC were pleased. Shepherd (2007a, p. 13) has explained that the political pressure exerted by the PPPC to secure this outcome was strategic. 'Having failed in their initial objective of halting the exhumations and preserving the dignity of the site with its remains', he writes, 'their concern was to protect the remains from further invasive procedures'. On the other hand, archaeologists and physical anthropologists were outraged, not least Morris. In an article to the Cape Times 'Ban on Prestwich bones study buries precious history' (25 November 2005) Morris and Friedling raised a number of specific objections to the resistance by the PPPC in respect of the issue of anatomical research and the remains

They characterised the SAHRA decision as 'breathtakingly short-sighted' and asserted that the decision was effectively a way to 'bury knowledge from the past' (ibid). In an interview in 2007, Morris angrily described to me the decision as supportive of the 'destruction of heritage' (pers. comm., 7 September). In the same letter Morris and Friedling also challenged the PPPC's emphasis on archival research and oral history as core research methodologies in exploring the meanings and histories associated with the remains. In Morris' measure, I discovered in our interview, oral history figures third on the list when it comes to evidence, the first being actual physical material, the second, written material. They suggested that the 'narrow view' of the PPPC 'threatens to smother knowledge that is critical to national heritage'.

We can think of no greater honour than to bring their era of forgotten history to life through these studies. The remains of these people must be reburied with due ceremony and proper memorialisation, but let us not silence them again burying them without study (ibid).

It is important to note that this article was preceded by a letter submitted by Morris to Phakamani Buthelezi of SAHRA. In this letter Morris wrote of his disappointment and anger at the SAHRA decision, and once again we encounter the notion that SAHRA were implicated in the 'destruction' of heritage.

At the simplest level I am extremely disappointed at your decision...I am very angry at the way SAHRA has allowed itself to be manipulated by special interest groups and the failure of the SAHRA committee to properly apply its collective mind to the full

issues of heritage resources.. At the bottom line, should SAHRA allow human skeletal remains to be reburied without study, then it is guilty of the destruction of the very heritage it was commissioned to protect (Morris 2005c).

In his denouement, Morris mapped a course of action.

In the end, I and my students have chosen to ignore your decision and will be submitting a full research proposal as part of the Multi-Disciplinary Research Strategy. We will also continue to apply pressure at all levels to insist that SAHRA considers the whole framework of historical studies, not just those based on restricted and bigoted views (ibid).

The cartoon (Figure 4) by political cartoonist, Grogan, effectively captures Morris' frustration and confusion at what he perceived was the narrow view of both the national heritage authorities and the **PPPC**.



*'Alas -poor Yorick, -Seihra won'
let nie'lcnOth you*

Figure 4 Caricature of Alan Morris by cartoonist, Grogan (source: Cape Argus).

Multi-disciplinary research

There is an ambiguity which needs to be pointed out at this juncture. If, by late September 2005, SAHRA had made an official decision to prohibit anatomical research on the remains of the Prestwich Street dead, then a question arises as to why SAHRA advertised, in the *Mail & Guardian* of 14 to 20 October 2005, for 'social scientists in the various disciplines, such as History, Archaeology, Sociology, Anthropology, Architecture & Planning, African Studies, and *Human Biology*' to

tender for the multi-disciplinary research project aimed to explore the histories associated with the Prestwich Street site? (SAHRA 2005, p. 1). Morris, Friedling, and Maanyapelo duly took note of this advertisement and submitted a research proposal for the contract. A letter of rejection from Beverley Crouts, the provincial manager for heritage in the Western Cape, was faxed to Morris on 9 December 2005.

The interesting point to make about the letter accompanying the proposal is the links it draws to a broader research project, spearheaded by Morris, with the title: *Historic Burials of Cape Town*. Worth approximately R400 000, the aim of the South African Netherlands Programme for Alternatives in Development (SANPAD) project, Morris explains, is to 'explore the osteological history of skeletons already excavated in the past and still in museum collections' (Friedling, Manyapelo & Morris 2005b). In fact, on 19 September 2003, more than two years prior to receiving the rejection letter, Morris wrote to Dr. A. Padayachee of SANPAD requesting a grant for a 'Pre-Proposal Workshop' to discuss the possibilities for a large skeletal biological research project on the human remains uncovered near Prestwich Street (Morris 2003). A grant was awarded by SANPAD and a series of local and one international participant met at the Victoria Junction Hotel on 10 November. Of the list of delegates who attended it is interesting to point out the extent to which all in attendance are specialist practitioners. The presumption underlying the workshop was clear. As soon as the archaeologists had completed work on site, the single biggest research opportunity for local and international scholars interested in historic burial sites would open up. At a recent workshop held in the Centre for African Studies, on the subject of public histories of slavery at the Cape, Martin Hall noted the high stakes for various scholars whose 'entire reputations' might have been made from the study of the Prestwich Street burial site and its remains.

4.3 Discussion

As a first move, I would like to locate this chapter within the context of two broader discussions. First, discussions about how knowledge itself and the processes of knowledge creation are understood in archaeology, and also, how scientific expert or specialist knowledges are justified and asserted in the public domain at the expense of other forms of knowledge and knowledge production not considered so (Jasanoff 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Leach, Scoones & Wynne 2005); and second, discussions within, and outside of, the disciplines of archaeology and physical anthropology about the nature of their disciplinary histories, identities, and trajectories both in southern Africa and globally (Skotnes 1996; Legassick & Rassool 2000; Shepherd 2003). These discussions are critical in the context of the Prestwich Street contestations as they point to a series of divergent strands of thinking around the place and purpose of archaeology and science in society. I begin by situating this chapter's analysis in the context of the former.

The paradigm of discovery, through which 'knowledge is "discovered" rather than "produced" (Shepherd 2002b, p. 127) is one which carries considerable conceptual weight in archaeological discourse. This dichotomy locates the constructivists at one end and the positivists at the other (Trouillot 1995, p. 5-6). 'Where the positivist view hides the tropes of power behind a naïve epistemology, the constructivist one denies the autonomy of the socio-historical process.' (ibid, p. 6) In the positivist conception, on the one hand, to discover knowledge implies that knowledge itself waits patiently for its discoverer: knowledge is a 'meaningless object waiting to be discovered under some timeless seal' (ibid, p. 29). On the other hand, to produce — to bring into being, to make, to construct, to invent — knowledge, implies a different set of relationships, not only to the knowledge object as object, or subject, but also to knowledge itself (Shepherd 2002b, p. 129).

Important to note is that the constructivist position allows for the possibility that knowledge may itself be differently configured; in other words that there are *knowledges*, rather than simply *knowledge*. Indeed, in the late 1970s, following the emergence of post-structuralist conceptions of the constructed-ness of knowledge, Said (1978, p. 4-5) wrote in *Orientalism* that 'We must take seriously Vico's great observation that men make their own history, that what they know is what they have made.' In a contemporary South African context, Shepherd (2002b, p. 129) has argued that 'there is nothing inevitable about the production of knowledge, even more so about the production of knowledge about the past. At the same time the majority of knowledge represents itself as just that'.

The implication of this discussion in the context of Prestwich Street is the extent to which particular conceptions of knowledge (positivist, constructivist) have shaped the ways in which the remains of the dead are thought of and approached. My argument is that a positivist conception of knowledge as discovered shaped the ways in which both archaeologists and scientists conceived of the significance of the remains. How is this so?

Indeed, one of the key binaries that emerges in the material of the Prestwich Street archive is that of the incompleteness versus the completeness of the historical record and, more particularly, of Cape Town's historical record. The meta-narrative that emerges out of thinking in terms of this binary is that the remains of the dead will more fully complete the picture of Cape Town's past. The 'discovery' of the site, 'the find' in Hart's words, is thus of 'major' archaeological and anthropological importance and is 'quite exciting' because of its potential to fill in the gaps of Cape history.

Yet the core justifications lent for the study of the dead rely on the assumption that the past is a puzzle that can be pieced together, as opposed to the assumption that the past is messy and incomplete. The corollary of this assumption, in practical terms, is that the disciplines of archaeology and physical anthropology are somehow privy to the remains because their practitioners are the puzzle crackers, whereby each new

'piece' is discovered and set into place.³³ The past and the discipline become intertwined, and function as almost entirely self-serving.

The two main points that I wish to assert at this point are therefore as follows: one, that the underlying assumptions guiding the thinking need to be challenged — that the past is incomplete, not always knowable, not always within the grasp of researchers, and that researchers do not 'give voice' to the past, but themselves speak for it; and, two, that the *a priori* ethical question of whether it is acceptable to disinter human remains and subject them to scientific study is, in the light of a plethora of negative public responses, and an admittedly limited process of information-sharing, discussion, and reaction, needs to be asked before any key decisions are taken (Scarre 2006).³⁴ The important implication of the first point is that the disciplines themselves are accountable to a broader audience — outside of internal peer-reviewers, disciplinary figure-heads, and institutional environments; while the second point demands a more sustained, focused and critical engagement with questions of the relation between science, transparency, and society (Jasanoff 2006). In fact there are multiple global debates, and even international legislation, which have attempted to address questions of science, descendancy, repatriation, and the treatment of human remains in contested socio-political contexts (see Jonker 2005, pp. 17-25), which do not enter into public discussions around Prestwich Street in any vigorous, forceful, or transformative manner. Furthermore, at times the obvious comparative case study, the African Burial Ground (ABG), was invoked; yet even the ABG's ostensible similarity to the Prestwich Street burial site was appropriated as the premise for fallacious argumentation.

In her introductory chapter to 'Buried beyond Buitengracht' Finnegan (2006, p. 5) writes that as 'a sensitive site informed by polarized belief systems, Prestwich is a textbook case.' But, 'what is unprecedented is the furor (sic) around this site that has effectively blocked 'scientific' study and further research into the social conditions of these individuals' lives.' Moreover, 'no matter how hard archaeologist (sic) try through public interventions to extol the advantages of speaking through science to demonstrate 'bottom up' histories, the dissonance between beliefs and empirically based research may remain' (ibid, p. 6). Thus, Finnegan writes of the results of the research as important for the following reason.

³³ 'Putting the puzzle together is what drives her'. The words are those of Helen Theron (2005, p. 4), in a profile article of Jacqui Friedling in the University of Cape Town *Monday Paper* (Tones flesh out the gaps in the city's history).

³⁴ In an important paper entitled 'Can archaeology harm the dead?', Scarre (2006, p. 181) argues the point. 'From an academic point of view, the study of corporeal remains of human beings and of the mode of their disposal is a crucial source of knowledge of the human past. Yet from an ethical perspective the highly intrusive nature of this study raises problems. Whilst a bone may be no more animate than a stone, it is the relic of a man or woman who once thought and felt, was happy and sad, loved and feared as we do. To disinter or disturb it, or to subject it to chemical or physical analysis, is to take a liberty — not with the thing itself but with the person to whom it once belonged.'

The findings will contribute towards laying particular histories open, from which constituencies may interpret their own knowledge system base claims of "culture", "identity" and "heritage". In some ways, this work can be seen as [a] race against time, to use archaeology to investigate what we can, before the vault of "memorialization" confines these people to a homogenized silence once again (ibid, p. 7).

In her concluding chapter, Finnegan refers to the case of New York's African Burial Ground (ABG) as an example of how descendant community interests and the interests of a particular scientific community productively coincided during the course of a multi-disciplinary research project. She writes —

If archaeologists can move 'beyond the data' and use opportunities for positive public relations, a constructive relationship with communities can be brokered. The value of research may be able to be communicated in a way that would engage the community and, like the ABG, would be able to complement the cultural analyses with the physical analysis of the remains and honor (sic) these lives by helping return to them more fully their forgotten past. (ibid, p. 178)

There are, I think, at least three questionable assumptions structuring these statements, which I would like to discuss briefly. The first is the underlying idea that archaeology happens outside of society; that the discipline simply generates knowledge apolitically from which 'constituencies' can make 'knowledge system base claims' of 'culture', 'identity' and 'heritage'. Linked to this is the idea that archaeology is the solution to the problem of history's silences and discontinuities, that somehow archaeology (and physical anthropology) will be able to give voice to the voiceless, will able to wrench them from the well of 'homogenized silence'.

The second is the implicit assumption that the uncovering of the ABG and that of the Prestwich Street burial site are synonymous historical events. On the very contrary, the historical and the contemporary contexts in which the burial and surfacing of the dead occurred in Cape Town and New York respectively are profoundly different contexts, and cannot therefore be made subject to an easy or direct comparison (Bennett 2007, pers. comm., 17 April), which is, in fact, Finnegan's opening move, one of her central assumptions, in 'Buried beyond Buitengracht'.

It is important that Finnegan's dissertation should not be read in isolation. A number of public attempts by certain University of Cape Town-based archaeologists — most notably archaeologists Judith Sealy (see chapter four), Andrew B. Smith and natural historian Nikolaas van der Merwe (2005) — to establish credibility for the scientific examination of the Prestwich Street remains were made by referring directly to the case of the ABG in New York. Put simply, the reasoning progressed as follows: since scientists were allowed to study the remains uncovered at the ABG, therefore scientists should be allowed to study the remains of the Prestwich Street dead. A meta-narrative of Prestwich Street equals the ABG was constructed to lend credence to local archaeological and scientific research interests.

It is indeed true that scientific research — bio-anthropological and archaeological research, in particular — was a prominent feature of the multi-disciplinary research

project that followed in the wake of the surfacing of African and African-American slave burial sites in New York in 1991 (Blakey and Rankin-Hill 2004; Perry, Howson and Bianco 2006). ownership and leadership of the research process were dissimilar in the case of the ABG, a fact which neither Sealy, Smith, and van der Merwe nor Finnegan appear to recognise. Where, at an early stage in the Prestwich Street public processes, predominantly white archaeologists and physical anatomists from the University of Cape Town advocated their interests in the scientific study of Prestwich Street human remains; the case of the ABG multi-disciplinary research project differed markedly. An agreed-upon group of scientists were convened at the historically black Howard University to conduct the research, importantly, the parameters and ethics of which had been agreed upon during public consultation with the ABG descendent community (Blakey 1998, 2004), and an 'ethical epistemology for public engaged biocultural research' (Blakey 2004, pp. 98-115, in Blakey & Rankin-Hill 2004), was adopted for the purposes of the project. In a paper presented to the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities in 1997, bio-anthropologist Michael Blakey (1998, p. 54) wrote —

Guided by our understanding of the efforts of indigenous peoples everywhere, we realized that it was wrong of scientists to arrogate to ourselves the right to determine the disposition of human remains and sacred objects against the wishes of descendants. We would indeed abide by, indeed welcome, the decision of the community as to whether there would be research or immediate reburial of remains...After a long process of public information sharing, the Federal Government provided funding, and the remains were brought to Howard University for a study that will end with reburial and memorialization.

The third questionable assumption embedded in Finnegan's concluding statement relates to a deeper ethical issue that Shepherd has addressed in his paper 'What does it mean to "give the past back to the people"?' (2007b). Note Finnegan's claim: to 'honor these lives by helping return to them more fully their forgotten past'. Shepherd (forthcoming 2008) argues that the trope, of giving "the past back to the people", is one which needs to be questioned and problematised. '[T]o wish "to give the past back to the people" he writes, 'frequently overlooks the telling of a prior story of dispossession.'

By placing "the people" in the passive relation of the receivers of the gift of "their past", it also elides alternative possibility, that they may wish to actively take it back. Furthermore, that they may wish to repossess their (multiple) pasts in forms unanticipated by the limiting discourses of cultural resources management.

Thus, to what extent is Finnegan as an archaeologist entitled to 'return to them more fully their forgotten past'? Who is "them" and what does this act of return entail for

35 The ABG multi-disciplinary research project also encompassed the discipline of history (see Medford 2004).

them and for "their past"? The converse of this question is of course: Who is the giver of the past and from what position of power or privilege does he or she or it — in the case of the discipline — know their past and "return [it] to them"? Indeed, is it really their past if it is given to them? And, if it is, is it the past that they know, recognise and are familiar with? Or is it another, quite other, past?

Two tainted histories

The history of the discipline of physical anthropology in South Africa up until the present day remains to a great extent a tainted history; as much as its local advocates have attempted, for at least the last four decades, to prove its relevance in terms of a paradigmatic shift during the 1960s and 1970s (Morris 1980, 1996, 2005, 2007; Sealy & Cox 2003; Sealy 2003).³⁶ Indeed, as much as the discipline of archaeology began as a 'colonialist endeavour' (Smith and Wobst 2005, p. 5), so too was the discipline of physical anthropology tied to the principles and practices of colonialism — a past that it has not yet demonstrably come to terms with, in theory and in practice. In the South African context, there are multiple histories of appropriation of crania and other skeletal remains for the purposes of anthropometric measurement in support of Eurocentric myths of otherness.

These histories are partially explored in a recent publication of two UWC historians, Martin Legassick and Ciraj Rassool (see also, Jonker 2000, pp. 25-30). In their short yet nonetheless important book, *Skeletons in the Cupboard* (2000) — the significance of which has been further amplified since the uncovering of human remains near Prestwich Street — Legassick and Rassool take issue with the discipline of physical anthropology as practiced in South Africa, and the trade in human remains which lay at its heart in the first twenty years of the twentieth century. 'What is at stake is a conspiracy of silence' they write. 'There were silences and cover-ups at the time as we shall see. More serious is the obliviousness to the problem in the discipline of physical anthropology and in museums almost to the present day' (Legassick & Rassool 2000, p. 1).

In a recently published memoir of esteemed South African anatomist and geneticist, *Into the past* (2006), Phillip Tobias recalls his encounters with the remains of various Khoisan peoples in a number of museums in Western Europe and the United Kingdom, the most well-known and controversial of which belonged to Sarah Baartman. On a 1955 visit to the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle to meet fellow scientist Camille Arambourg (where he eventually discovered the remains of Baartman), Tobias (2006, p. 84-86) recounts one illuminating moment during which he reflected on the very great extent to which the 'mute and nameless' remains of southern African indigenous peoples had hitherto been collected for study, and,

³⁶ The shift occurred with the rejection of race science in favour of studies of genetic variation.

ultimately, display in European museums for the enlightenment of metropolitan publics.

I gazed at these publicly exhibited remains and myriad reflections welled up within me. Most of the skeletal remains labeled 'Khoe-San' in museum and university departments had been excavated from archaeological deposits, and they were anonymous. We could say that the cultural remains found with them were of the Wilton or Smithfield or other industry of the Later Stone Age, and we could act as 'medical detectives' identifying the age, gender and physical features of the deceased. But rarely could we say, these bones belonged, for example, to Mrs Waterboer or Mr Khomani. In that sense they have remained mute and nameless.. How many hundreds of Khoe-San crania and skeletons were purloined from southern Africa and now repose lonesomely in institutions all over the world?

If the discipline of physical anthropology is thus directly implicated in the history of appropriation of human remains for the purposes of advancing particular scientific knowledges, both in the metropole and in the colony itself, to what ends did the study of indigenous South African bodies and skeletons serve as a means?

In his introduction to *Science and society in southern Africa* (2000), Saul Dubow traces the importance of science in a southern African context during the period of its colonisation, and its particular functions in ordering Africa and its pre-colonial peoples in European terms (see also Dubow 2006). The underlying intention of the colonial scientific project in Africa was twofold: to produce a (controllable) image of the other, the African, while simultaneously producing a (relational) image of the European self. There was an important consequence of this attempt to structure Africa and the African in the European imaginary to give the European a sense of self-pride and confidence, which was the moral assertion of colonial science and, indeed, imperialism. As Dubow (2000, p. 3) has explained —

By virtue of its universalising claims and assumptions science offered a powerful conceptual means to bridge otherwise bewildering gaps and dissonances between metropole and periphery and, in doing so, to make the African comprehensible within a European paradigm. In making sense — or nonsense — of exotic 'others', colonial scientists were vitally concerned to validate, affirm and structure their own beliefs and sense of moral or imperial purpose (ibid).

Challenges to the disciplines

The criticism of the form of archaeology practiced by the ACO and their team at Prestwich Street is an important contribution of the work of Shepherd to the debate around Prestwich Street. Shepherd advocates an alternative archaeology of the dead in his essay, 'Archaeology dreaming: post-apartheid imaginaries and the bones of the Prestwich Street dead' (2007a, p. 21) —

Prestwich Street encourages us to revisit and re-examine core disciplinary practices and ideas, and to consider alternative ways of knowing the archaeological past and of

approaching the problematics of heritage and memory in post-apartheid society. It raises the possibility of alternative archaeologies, even of alternative epistemologies. We associate archaeology with a radical — a prying — 'will to knowledge', every excavation a mini-enactment of the Enlightenment injunction to know, to uncover. Prestwich Street makes the argument for an alternative kind of archaeology: an archaeology of silence, of secrecy, of closure (rather than disclosure).

This statement should not however be read independently, but rather in the context of the long-standing engagement of Shepherd and other African archaeologists, like Hall, with questions of the relation between the discipline of archaeology to society, to theory, and, ultimately, to itself (Shepherd 1998; 2002a; 2002b; 2003a; 2003b; 2004).

With its publication in May 1998, Shepherd's doctoral dissertation broke new ground in the context of South African archaeology. *Archaeology and post-colonialism: the theory, practice and politics of archaeology after apartheid*, carefully and rigorously historicises archaeology in South Africa, in terms of its relation to colonialism and apartheid and in particular to some of the disciplines key personalities and guiding ideas.

[The] particular methodologies, paradigms, procedures, and protocols of reportage and display which make up the discipline of archaeology — as opposed to these informal or folk archaeologies — have their origins in a particular conjunction of historical and intellectual contexts in the societies of north-western Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These include the Enlightenment, the rise of capitalist production, and not least, colonialism itself. The newly constituted discipline of archaeology figured in a complex nexus: a new valuation of the material object associated with the development of capitalist production, a curiosity about antecedents and a new faith in the scientific method, and an alertness to the diversity of human culture and experience revealed in the course of colonial expansion itself. Its export to other parts of the world took place as a more general transfer of goods, technologies and ideas (p. 31).

In a later essay, 'Disciplining archaeology: the invention of South African prehistory, 1923-1953' (2002b), Shepherd demonstrates the manner in which the first structures of the discipline in South Africa came into being. The formation of the discipline of archaeology in South Africa was given a particular impetus primarily by the Cambridge-trained archaeologist A.J.H (John) Goodwin. Goodwin was instrumental in laying some of the foundations — chronologies, typologies, nomenclatures, epistemological schemas — for a conception of South African prehistory. Furthermore, it was during Goodwin's heyday, Shepherd suggests, that 'we see the emergence and formation of the discipline of archaeology in South Africa in a recognisable format...with an associated set of practices and guiding ideas' (p. 128). Archaeology, he writes, 'was disciplined and localised in the period post-1923 in terms of a named set of cultures, industries, forms of life and modes of production.'

This archaeological imaginary was made available in two ways: as a set of texts (that is a set of site reports, syntheses, and speculative papers, couched in the formal terminology of the discipline), and as a series of points on the landscape, with each

place-name denoting a notable site or discovery. One could read (or write) the text, but one could also visit the site, and see, touch, feel and smell "the past" (p. 144).

Building on a series of criticisms of the precepts of South African archaeology's colonial history and influences, as well as criticisms of later forms of archaeological theory and practice (the New Archaeology, post-processual archaeology), one of Shepherd's core concerns has since been to foreground and challenge the discipline's hesitance to engage with questions of culture and politics and, more broadly, society at large — 'the idea that archaeology in South Africa (and elsewhere) exists above the political contexts in which it operates' (p. 119). For example in 'When the hand that holds the trowel is black...': disciplinary practices of self-representation and the issue of 'native' labour in archaeology' (2003b), Shepherd attempts, in a limited although nonetheless successful manner, to re-write a portion of the history of the discipline by interpreting a series of photographic images from the Goodwin archive portraying the spectral, unacknowledged presences of the discipline's "native" labourers in these photographs. Titles of Shepherd's subsequent papers have included, 'The politics of archaeology in Africa' (2002c); 'State of the discipline: science, culture and identity in South African archaeology, 1870-2003'; and, 'Looking north, heading south: why we need a post-colonial archaeology' (2004). If there are signs that the discipline of archaeology is contested, and in a state of flux, what then of the discipline of physical anthropology?

As I read and re-read the physical anthropological report of the Cobern Street exhumations written by Cox and others (2001), which is titled 'Stable carbon and nitrogen isotopic analyses of the underclass at the colonial Cape of Good Hope in the eighteenth and nineteenth century', I found myself thwarted by the authors' central claim that the stable carbon and nitrogen isotope ratios would 'reveal the life histories of the underclass' (p. 73) buried at Cobern Street. What, then, if anything at all, did I learn from this account about Cape Town's 'underclasses' and their 'life histories'? The major claim of this report is that the people of Cape society that were buried between 1750 and 1827 on the site are varied in terms of the places of origin and their social status. It is shown that some of the individuals may have been: slaves from Mozambique; slaves of Makua, Yao, or Moravi descent; Khoisan from the Northern and Western Cape; or, 'first-generation immigrants from Indian Ocean realms' (ibid, pp. 89-90). These conjectural conclusions are based on an examination of the different kinds of burial practices, forms of dental modification, as well as dietary habits of the dead, in relation to a disciplinary literature that, importantly, has established the grounds for such conclusions.

Yet the author's do very little to tell us in any detail about any individual's life history, nor do the authors do very much to convince us that the kinds of conclusions reached are not ones that can be reasonably inferred from available bodies of written and oral evidence.

The extent to which the discipline of physical anthropology can indeed reveal the life histories of the underclass, by giving "voice" to the bones of the dead, is I think wholly questionable, as is the proprietorial, even patronising, attitude that

the loss of entitlement; a sense of not receiving that which you believe is rightfully yours. The overblown language of Morris suggests even a sense of disenfranchisement, of exclusion, and omission. The question remains, nevertheless, to what extent archaeologists and scientists were willing to engage with the ethical argument instantiated by the PPC that the remains should not be studied. I think there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that there was not willingness at all.

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Chapter 5

The discourse of heritage resources management

Introduction

How can we describe the character of the discourse of the Prestwich Street heritage management? At the outset, I would like to invoke an image of the heritage manager *as juggler*. The four balls: the development of The Rockwell; the actual heritage resources management of the site and remains viz. the NHRA, as well as local and provincial heritage management and city planning laws, regulations, and protocols; the demands of the disciplines of archaeology and physical anthropology; and, as I explore in chapter six, the forces of memory and identity viz. the Hands Off Committee (the PPPC). The task of analysing the heritage management discourse around Prestwich Street lies precisely in disaggregating the particular interests and forces at play, as well as illustrating the moment in which the discourse itself emerges in a broader South African context. Where, and when, does the discourse have its genesis? To what extent, if at all, did SAHRA or the CSRFF support the interests of the developer, the archaeologists, the PPPC at the expense of other public, private and professional interests? Was SAHRA able to locate and draw on the "spirit" of the NHRA through its public interventions and decisions? What languages, vocabularies, conceptual tools, registers, and forms and modes of expressions did heritage managers draw on in "dealing" with the dead? It is this task and these questions that I address in this chapter.

5. I Context

The three major players in the heritage management of the Prestwich Street burial site and its remains, the first and third of which are legislated by the NHRA, were SAHRA, the Heritage Resources Section (HRS), and the Cultural Sites and Resources Forum (CSRFF) (Ernsten 2006).³⁷ The NHRA, passed in 1999, is preceded by the National Monuments Act 28 (of 1969), the Natural History and Historical Monuments, Relics and Antiquities Act (of 1934), and the Bushmans Relic Act 22 (of 1911), which was the 'first conservation legislation' introduced by the South African Union government 'to extend a measure of protection to archaeological sites

³⁷ For a detailed and critical discussion of the positionalities and involvements of these agencies, see pp. 54-72.

(especially rock art sites), but also to control the burgeoning trade in human remains of Bushmen origins' (Shepherd 2002b, p. 132; see also Jonker 2005, pp. 25-30).³⁸

The NHRA is the act that currently informs the practice of all South African heritage management nationally, and is thus the umbrella under which all heritage matters and disputes are ultimately positioned. In terms of its bureaucratic structure, South African heritage governance (like all governance in South Africa more generally) is divided into three spheres — local, provincial, and national. At a local level, the HRS of the CTCC is the city's heritage authority; at a provincial level, HWC is the heritage authority for the Western Cape region; and, at a national level, it is SAHRA that is charged with the overall task of managing the national estate. The ideal heritage management scenario envisaged by the NHRA is that all three spheres of government work together to realise the act's aims and ideals, and to implement its regulations and protocols in all matters pertaining to the national estate.

In terms of Section 36 (6) of the NHRA, following the events of 16 May, the presence of human skeletal remains on site at Prestwich Street was reported by the development team to the South African Police Service (SAPS), the CTCC, and SAHRA, and work on site was ordered to an official halt. On 30 May, SAHRA notified developer Efstathiou of the legal requirements of the NHRA in respect of graves and sites of burial known to be present beneath the surfaces of private property. One of the requirements of the act, in this regard, is a cessation of any activities on site to allow for a process of public notification and consultation to determine the existence of any direct descendants or, indeed, a descendant community. This brief process, as conducted by the Cultural Sites and Resources Forum (hereinafter 'the CSRF') spanned the statutory sixty-day period from 9 June to 16 August.

The CSRF, whose mission is 'to provide a forum for public debate over issues of sensitive, sacred and contested sites in particular, and to respond to requests for consultation advice on cultural heritage practice and management in general' (Malan 2003, p. 3), were specifically appointed by the ACO and the development team to conduct the statutory public notification and consultation processes. The CSRF was formed in response to a similar instance of public contestation over a site of significance in the centre of Cape Town, at St. Cyprians High School (Tayob 2007).³⁹ One core member of the CSRF is historical archaeologist, Antonia Malan, who is also a long-standing member of the UCT Department of Archaeology. The link between

³⁸ There are a number of peripheral act in addition to those I have cited above. These are the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), the Land Use Provision Ordinance (LUPO), the Human Tissues Act and the Provincial Exhumations Ordinance (Halkett, Hart and Malan 2004).

³⁹ In particular, the CSRF was established in 2000. Antonia Malan of the CSRF reported on the public consultation process in a document prepared for the South African Heritage Resources Agency and the Developer (see Malan 2003). Louise Green and Noeleen Murray have edited a collection on burial grounds for the *Journal of Islamic Studies* (forthcoming 2008), which is useful in tracing the history and activities of the CSRF. See also Tayob (2007).

the ACO, the development team, and the CSRF was thus the logical one. At that particular moment in time, there were also ostensibly no other organisations with the specific knowledge and record of involvement to accept the task (Malan, pers. comm. 20 September 2007).

In particular, Malan spearheaded the process of public notification and consultation with the assistance of Emmylou Rabe, and a number of helpers, "special reference groups," and external — external that is, to the CSRF — consultants. Public notification as initiated by the CSRF was broad and extensive, even if public consultation as such was not. Signs were erected on site in the three official provincial languages — English, Afrikaans and Xhosa — and individuals were informed of the burial site through e-mail networks, the newspaper press, and radio and television broadcasts. Site visits were also organised on request. Interested and Affected Parties (IAP's) were asked in turn to register their written responses by telephone, e-mail and fax (see Malan 2003).

The specific purpose of a public consultation and notification process, according to Section 36 5a and 5b, is twofold: 'to contact and consult communities and individuals who by tradition have an interest in such grave or burial ground' and to '[reach] agreements with such communities and individuals regarding the future of such grave or burial ground.' (NHRA 1999, p. 62) These two key provisions are, of course, open to multiple readings and interpretations, a point to which I want to return in my discussion. The Act also states that a permit for the exhumation of skeletal remains from an 'unknown' burial ground older than sixty-years may not be granted by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority until the conditions stipulated under points 5a and 5b have been met (ibid).

A series of framing questions are in order. Instead of constructively and creatively engaging in an attempt to meet the demands of this process, on the basis of a radical notion of inclusivity, during the period of the PCP what we observe from the heritage management record is the clear emergence of what Shepherd has called a 'political strategy of containment' (Shepherd 2007, p. 20), on the part of SAHRA, the HRS, and the CSRF, which would continue to characterise heritage management discourse around the site and remains till at least the SAHRA decision on 21 September 2005. How, then, did this strategy come into being? What were its aims and intentions? Why did it develop in the trajectory it did?

5.2 Analysis

The first significant intervention on the part of SAHRA's Permit Committee was to grant, at its own discretion, permission for the ACO to begin exhumations prior to the establishment of an official public notification and consultation period, as well as prior to its implementation. I think that, contrary to the ostensible pragmatism of protecting the remains from the winter rains (chapter four), the desired effect of this decision was actually to assure the development team that the heritage authorities

were acting urgently, realistically, sensibly, and ultimately in a manner that would indicate to the team that development work would continue as soon as could be arranged. That the Urban Conservation Unit (UCU) of the City of Cape Town (CCT) did not demonstrate knowledge of the burial site to the development team prior to granting a demolition permit were potential grounds for legal action by the development team against the CTCC. The necessities of the situation were therefore apparent to all stakeholders, including SAHRA leadership.

A series of three public meetings were held as part of the public notification and consultation process, which I have already alluded to in chapters three and four (see also chapter six). The second significant intervention by heritage managers, then, was to conduct the first meeting seven weeks following the uncovering of human remains, and three weeks after archaeological excavations got underway. Exhumation as option was thus presented as a *fait accompli*, to the dismay of many of the meeting's attendants. In a sense SAHRA had gotten ahead of itself right from the word go.

In fact, the public reaction at the meeting to the exhumation activities on site, and the nature of the decisions that had hitherto been taken without full public support, indicated that not only were the stakes high for the development team and the ACO, but that they were also, if equally, high for certain individuals and collectivities with a different set of interests in the site (see chapter six). Thus, the shock and confusion for heritage managers that resulted following the first public meeting (see, for example, Malan 2003, Appendix, pp. 1-8) may itself be seen as indicative of SAHRA's first major awareness of another set of forces to contain. At the third public meeting, then CEO of SAHRA, Pumla Madiba made this clear to attendants in her reflections on proceedings at St. Stephens on 29 July.

[W]e actually experienced the mood of the meeting. We thought it responsible for us to react to the mood that we experienced. We quickly amended the original permit in response to what happened on the 29th... we thought it responsible to amend and say work must stop (SAHRA 2003d, p. 6-7).

The third public meeting was held at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Green Point on 29 August. Among those present at the meeting were Madiba, Dr. Mongezi Guma, and Antonia Malan. Madiba and Guma tasked with facilitation, while Malan was present to address questions and to deliver clarification on pertinent issues.

The meeting was immediately given shape with two opening remarks made by Guma and Madiba respectively, who mentioned that the purpose of the 'report back meeting' was to 'wind off a process' (ibid) that had begun two months earlier. In the meeting's transcript we also read the following formulations: of how SAHRA 'followed the due protocol' (Madiba); of the manner in which the CSRF attempted to 'seek public comment and put on record cultural heritage practices and management in general' (Malan); that 'there's no formula for public participation' (Madiba); and of the need to proceed 'in a responsible way' so that 'life continues on the 1st of

September [the official end date of the consultation and notification period]' (Madiba).

In her report on the PCP Malan wrote that Prestwich Street is a 'test case for the implementation of the National Heritage Resources Act' (Malan 2003, p. 3). In the same report we read of the 'accidentally discovered burials', bones that were 'discovered accidentally', a series of 'rescue exhumations', and an 'emergency situation for the Developer' (p. 3, 5). In the audio-visual record of the first public meeting we listen to Pumla Madiba address the audience about an 'accident' and a 'discovery' (Thulani 2003). In the transcript of the third public meeting we also encounter Madiba's assessment of the event as a 'learning moment', and Malan recount how archaeologists were 'called in to deal with that [burial ground] because they are trained to remove the bones in the respectful, in the correct way and in order to learn how they got to be where they were' (SAHRA 2003d, p. 6). In one unforgettable formulation, Madiba mused about the significance of the burial site's uncovering. 'Maybe it was a blessing in disguise that they were accidentally found so that we can learn more about our heritage' (quoted in Damon 2003).

There are two points to be made here about the fragments of discourse I have presented above. The first point is one about the abdication, the abandonment, the lack, of responsibility that the notion of an 'accidental discovery' implies (see also chapter six). For an object or "thing", not least a burial site for society's underclasses, to have been discovered accidentally there must be the conditions of discontinuity, contingency, and ignorance. Importantly, this is not to suggest that SAHRA, the HRS, or the UCU, did indeed know of the specifics of the site in the moment during which demolition approval was granted; but rather reflects a deeper, more profound, sense of how heritage managers' failed to acknowledge the colonial past to the publics whose individual, family, and community histories were erased over hundreds of years only to be 'accidentally discovered' on the site of a multi-million Rand property development.

Rather than attempt to empathise and engage with the imagined community of Prestwich Street in complex ways, SAHRA attempted to resolve the problem posed by the burial site in the quickest and most effective possible manner, 'while still maintaining maximum cultural heritage potential'. The core issue at stake, I think, does not lie in laying out blame; but rather lies in problematising the particular languages with which the site and its remains was appropriated, mis-appropriated or even expropriated.

The second point links up with what Ernst (2006, p. 61) has termed the 'outsourcing' of expert knowledges by the Prestwich Street heritage managers, as well as the notion of the role of the heritage managers as facilitator, 'referee' (Malan pers. comm., 20 September 2007) or, as I have characterised it, the heritage manager as juggler. If the sudden emergence of a site of historical significance on the post-apartheid landscape led to the opening up of another potential, and hopeful, space of engagement with the colonial and apartheid past in the present, then heritage management at Prestwich Street attempted to close down this space by consciously

placing particular specialists, experts, reference groups, and historical knowledge producers in a relation of power with the site and its remains, the result of which was to eliminate other research methodologies, ways of reading and interpreting the city's histories and futures, and even other knowledges of the dead. A series of key management decisions, like the decision to grant an exhumation permit, or the decision to conduct the public participation in a certain manner with a certain collection of expert knowledges, meant that the Prestwich Street heritage managers could manage and keep with their control critical outcomes on site.

The formation of the Hands Off Committee, and the formal appeals the Committee lodged against the SAHRA decision to continue the exhumations, thus posed a key set of challenges for heritage managers. Antonia Malan (pers. comm. 20 September 2007) described the approach of the Hands Off Committee in terms of an 'ethos of freezing', and as an attempt to the 'delegitimise' what was assumed by many to be due legal process, not least the development team. In a sense, SAHRA self-consciously placed itself in a position of juggling a narrow conception of public heritage in one hand and development in another, yet did not appear to consider any possibilities outside of this binary.

In a letter addressed to the Hands Off Committee, dated 11 September, Malan attempted to explain the complexities of managing public consultation in an effective and inclusive manner, not least because of the relative newness of the NHRA and SAHRA. 'This is test case', she wrote.

Because of the site's significance and complexities, here was the perfect chance to go beyond "consultation", and rather create wider public awareness and — most important — encourage participation in decision-making. However, the means were not obvious or easy and were developed as the process unfolded.

Malan (pers. comm. 20 September 2007) expressed to me the difficulty, the 'nightmare' in her words, of the sixty-day process. It 'was not easy to know where to go' she admitted, and the competing interests were 'really difficult to manage'.

On 12 September 2003 the Hands Off Committee submitted what was to be its first appeal against the exhumations. In the appeal document itself, dated 23 October, the Committee urged the SAHRA Permit Committee to reconsider the value of the remains in relation to the site of their interment — importantly, not in developmental terms but rather in terms of the language of the NHRA.

The significance of the remains is inextricably linked to the site in which they are interred. The separation of these two elements will result in a devaluation of both...This issue is far greater than the substantial interests of the developer or whatever political axe which the ad hoc committee might allegedly wish to grind. The value accrued from the site for an individual, in this instance the developer, must be weighed up against its capacity to facilitate 'healing and symbolic restitution' [quotation taken directly from the NHRA] to those South Africans affected by the history associated with the burial ground at Prestwich Street (HOPSAHC 2003c, pp. 2-3).

An appeal date was set for 23 October, and the hearing took place at the head offices of SAHRA (SAHRA 2003b). The SAHRA Appeals Committee reconvened in Johannesburg on 18 November after a period of deliberation. During this meeting, a decision was taken in favour of the development team, and the exhumation permit was re-validated. Archaeological work on site resumed on 5 December 2003.

Altogether dissatisfied with the outcome, on 9 December the Hands Off Committee registered a second appeal with the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Ben Magubane, against the decision of the SAHRA Appeals Committee (HOPSAHC 2003d). Weeder cited a procedural conflict of interest which, in the opinion of the Committee, had resulted in an unfair first appeal.

In our considered view, we believe that the first appeal hearing basically constituted a conflict of interest in as much as SAHRA (and the City of Cape Town) had earlier sanctioned development on the site and had granted 'permission' for the Developer to proceed. Having thus sat in judgement of itself at the first appeal hearing and having made a ruling in favour of its own interests, underscores this conflict of interest (*ibid*).

The Hands Off Committee called for an independent tribunal, the final forum for disputes in matters pertaining to the national estate, to be constituted by the ministry to decide the matter. Dr. Barney Pitso Rabe of the University of South Africa (UNISA) was appointed by then Minister of Minerals and Energy and Acting Minister of Arts, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, to hear the appeal. The tribunal appeal hearing was scheduled for 20 May 2004 in Cape Town, and took place at the Nelson Mandela Gateway to Robben Island at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront — a fact worth noting in terms of its significance on Cape Town's map of nationally and internationally significant heritage sites.

The key contextual point to make here is as follows: that the Hands Off Committee's appeal was lodged when it was meant that it would not receive due consideration until early January 2004 when government officials return to office. Thus, there appeared to the development team and ACO archaeologists a 'window of opportunity' (Rassool 2005) during which the ACO worked intensively on site to remove as much of the skeletal material as possible. Rassool (2005) spoke to Ernst of the manner in which the ACO 'cleaned out that place' during this period. Once the appeal was officially received on 12 January 2004 (Ralebipi 2004), only then would archaeological work come to a halt to allow for the decided outcome.

Early in 2004, the Hands Off Committee selected a new and more representative title. Thus, the Hands Off Prestwich Street Burial Grounds Ad Hoc Committee became the Prestwich Place Project Committee (PPPC). This shift was significant in that it signified a more focussed engagement on the part of the individuals involved in the Committee in the matter, a quality which was also reflected in heightened contexts of the second appeal.

The newly constituted PPPC cited three core reasons as to why it opposed the decision of the Appeals Committee. The first reason concerned protocol. The PPPC argued that from its outset the public consultation process was 'inadequate' (PPPC

2004, p. 2) The PPPC cited the comparative case of the repatriation of the remains of Sara Baartman, during which public consultation was 'extensive', to contest the point that to 'define three public meetings as a process of consulting the public significantly undervalued [sic] the gravitas of the discovery at Prestwich Street' (ibid, p. 4). The second reason was jurisprudential; that is, the PPPC argued that although SAHRA may have acted in accordance with the letter of the law, it did not act in accordance with the spirit of the NHRA. 'Too much haste was exercised in coming to a resolution to the problem presented by the discovery' (ibid, p. 4). The third reason concerned the 'intrinsic value' (ibid) of the site. The claim of the PPPC was that the site is 'sacred ancestral land' (ibid, p. 7) and should therefore be treated as such.

The legal defence of the development team was unequivocal in its assertion that there was no conflict of interest in the decision of the first appeal, and that the SAHRA Appeals Committee had upheld the decision of the Permit Committee 'on the basis of its own evaluation of the facts and the representations made by interested parties' (Seligson 2004). A number of months later, on 1 July, the Tribunal finalised its decision, and rejected the appeal of the PPPC.

The Tribunal has taken sufficient notice of the need to balance the social, economic and scientific value of the find and its significance to the people of Cape Town and South Africa. They are not persuaded that SAHRA or the Appeals Committee failed to take account of these considerations.

Reactions to this decision were mixed. On the one hand, the PPPC were overtly disappointed. Father Terry Lester of the PPPC was said to have been 'deeply saddened' (Gosling 2004, p. 1, cited in Shepherd 2007, p. 13). Indeed, the implication of the tribunal's decision was profound. It effectively meant that the total exhumation of the remains from the site would ensure its complete erasure — in its original form — from the post-apartheid landscape. Development would thus continue as with any other building site, as if nothing unusual had transpired. On the other hand, with the results of the tribunal showing in his favour, Efstathiou was able to breathe a sigh of relief. In an interview with *Cape Times* environmental writer, Melanie Gosling, he said:

I'm relieved. Unfortunately it took 14 months to get to this decision. This wasted time has cost me millions of rands. I played by the law, but I still got the bad end of the deal (Gosling 2004).

On 5 October 2004, the ACO and its team of archaeologists resumed the exhumations at Prestwich Place. Work was completed approximately five months later, on 2 March 2005.

A press release issued by the Office of the Mayor of Cape Town on 19 April 2004 announced that the remains would be ceremonially transferred to the Woodstock Day Hospital. The warehouse in which the remains had been stored hitherto was deemed inadequate as a place of storage for human remains. The old mortuary of the Woodstock Day Hospital was therefore refurbished to house the remains. Talk of a

'cleansing ceremony' had begun months prior to the procession, as a means 'to facilitate healing and reconciliation'. In a draft document describing the necessity for a cleansing ceremony, we read of how such a ceremony will 'be a move towards bringing harmony, peace, respect and dignity to the dead' and 'clean/purify the processes (and the people who) disturbed the dead in a spiritual way' (SAHRA 2003h).

A 'solemn procession' (Khoisan 2004) from Prestwich Street through the centre of Cape Town to the hospital was organised by the mayoral office, SAHRA, and the PPPC to take place at mid-day on 21 April. In a statement by then mayor of Cape Town, Nomaindia Mfeketo, the significance of the ceremonial transfer was publicly delineated.

The remains are the ancestors of the citizens of Cape Town, people who helped to create this great city. They deserved to be treated with dignity and respect. Moving the remains from unsuitable premises is a step towards restoring the dignity they deserve (CCT 2004).

On Wednesday 21 April 2004 (Human Rights Day), a procession marched through the streets of Cape Town from the City Centre en route to the Woodstock Day Hospital. Attended by long-standing anti-apartheid activist and current finance minister to South Africa, Trevor Manuel, among many others, the procession was the first major public event symbolically demarcating the significance of the Prestwich Street remains in the post-apartheid national imagination. Manuel described the event as an important one in that it was one that would shape the 'character of a city like Cape Town' (Yutar 2004). 'We need to tell our offspring where we come from,' he said, 'that which has shaped and those who have shaped the history of the country' (Roelf 2004). Eleven boxes filled with the remains of the dead, signifying South Africa's eleven national languages, were all draped with the national flag and carried at the front of the procession. Michael Weeder spoke at an interfaith religious ceremony, which was organised alongside the procession. 'They [the spirits of the dead] were witnesses to colonial struggle,' he professed, 'witnesses to the shame and woundedness of apartheid and were there ululating [on] the day of liberation' (Roelf 2004).

The discussions around the cleansing ceremony, and the performance of the public procession, I think may be interpreted as a partially successful, if limited, attempt by SAHRA to demonstrate its interest and involvement in the matter vis-à-vis the preamble of the NHRA. By processing from Prestwich Street to the Woodstock Day Hospital, South Africans of all backgrounds were engaging in symbolic acts of restoration, dignity, and restitution. The national flags, the religious overtones, the remains of the unnamed dead: all fitting of a nation, and a city, attempting to re-imagine its past in the light of its present and future.

Yet, the critical point is that the procession occurred almost a year after the surfacing of the remains, and in the wake of a series of angry battles over the fate of the site, which were still then in state of dispute. Thus, although on the surface

SAHRA was seen publicly to be fulfilling its role as the national heritage authority, the core issues at stake in the matter were still fiercely contested, not least the acts of exhumation that lead to the remains being moved in lieu of giving back to the dead the 'dignity they deserve'.

5.3 Discussion

In an email to Andre van der Merwe on 3 June 2003, ACO archaeologist Tim Hart expressed relief that SAHRA had 'waived the 60 day [public] advertising period provided [exhumation] happens simultaneously' (Hart 2003a). Hart's fleeting statement points to a critical issue in the general management of the site and the remains. A conflict of interest, in respect of the responsibilities of the archaeological contractors to the developer, versus its responsibilities to SAHRA and the South African citizenry at large, has been pointed out as a weakness in the new heritage legislation (Shepherd 2007).⁴ Consequentially, I think that what we read in the sub-text of Hart's statement is a sense of relief at the favourable outcome made possible by SAHRA vis-a-vis the exhumation permit, but also a sense of exclusivity — encouraged, if inadvertently, by the NHRA itself — in the manner in which the development team and the archaeological team approached a site of national significance to the exclusion of other interests. The counter-claim is that there was indeed a contractual obligation between the developer and the archaeologists vis-à-vis SAHRA and the NHRA, and thus the ACO had to a set of responsibilities to uphold in terms of that obligation. However, the rhetorical question remains: to what extent did the ACO and SAHRA engage in a series of unethical archaeological and heritage practices in implementing what they understood to be the letter of the law? This is a question that will undoubtedly become the subject of debate in time to come.

As I point out briefly in chapter two, one of the tensions that emerged in public discussions about the Prestwich Street dead was the tension between notions of reason (intellect) and emotion (feeling). Indeed, one of the meta-narratives that consistently structures the language of development especially, but also the language of the heritage managers, was that reason and logic is the basis for all decision; and not emotion, subjectivity, past experience, and people's interior 'reasons' and 'logics' for making sense of the world. For example, Michael Philippides (2005) spoke of the PPPC as such —

When you have an emotional group of people [the PPPC] that are certainly not representative of the greater community and when you have such a small minority of people who are actually appealing on an emotional level as opposed to a reasonable

40 As the NHRA (1999, p. 60) states, 'SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority may not issue a permit for the destruction or damage of any burial ground or grave referred to in subsection (3) (a) unless it is satisfied that the applicant has made satisfactory arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment of the contents of such graves, at the cost of the applicant and in accordance with any regulations made by the responsible heritage resources authority'.

(heartfelt) expressions of a deep sense of injustice in response to the exhumations, then the language of heritage resources management was the language of site management, maximum cultural heritage potential, solutions to problems based on reasonable and sensible thinking, ways forward, interested and affected parties, and 'the fact that life must go on' (Shepherd 2008 forthcoming).

The set of discourse practices invoked were practices such as: the organisation of public and facilitation of consultation meetings; consultation with professional bodies and special reference groups; the production of official reports and press statements; the organisation of appeal hearings; and the like. These discourse practices stood in opposition to the regular candlelit vigils and prayer meetings of the PPPC on site; the placement of a billboard outside of St. George's Cathedral in Adderley Street; religious services at St. Georges Cathedral; politically charged letters to the press; religious services to commemorate the dead; and public performances of furore and outrage. An appropriate question to lead into my final chapter: what of the discrepancy in the discourses at play, and associated discourse practices?

Conclusion

In my frontier model of the Prestwich Street contestations, the discourse of heritage resources management gave shape to the frontier vis-a-vis the *forces of containment*. The forces of containment gained an impetus as articulators of the discourse attempted to find a management trajectory — 'the satisfactory resolution of the matter' — in and amongst a series of radically diverging interests and perspectives as to exactly how to proceed with the embattled site and remains. In this chapter I investigate how this discourse and its attendant forces were also brought to bear upon the different actors engaged in the contestations, as well as the consequences of the outcomes that emerged out of the site's management. By way of return to my image of the heritage manager as juggler I have the following concluding remark. If heritage management meant juggling a diverse set of interests and forces, then a number of key balls were dropped in the process; if not purposefully, then without a ready (political) consciousness of those balls which fell back to the earth.

Chapter 6

A public heritage counter-discourse

Introduction

Our history is a history of dislocation because removal is not just physical removal; removal means psychological destruction. It means unravelling the fabric of what society knits together as a blanket to gird it against the excesses of the grim reapers, who have no respect for culture, no respect for faith, no respect for spirituality. And when we say that our people have a history of removal, yes our people have a history of removal but they also have a history of disintegration, of deconstruction, of self-hatred, and those bones present a challenge. They literally can act as a vehicle, as a catalyst, to bring us together again (Khoisan 2005).

In this chapter, I return to an idea introduced in chapter one in my discussion of Fraser's contribution to theorising the public sphere: the idea of the subaltern counter public. Specifically, I would like to suggest that the PPPC (previously the Hands Off Committee) can be interpreted as a subaltern counter public that emerged in response to 'exclusions within [the] dominant publics' (Fraser 1993, p. 528) — the development team, some archaeologists and scientists, as well as the Prestwich Street heritage managers — following the first exhumations, and then, the pivotal SAHRA decision to recommence the exhumation work on site. To extend my usage of Fraser's terminology, the PPPC may also, I think, be interpreted as a 'weak public' that challenged the decision-makers (SAHRA, and the Independent Tribunal — the state), and the 'strong publics' (the ACO, members of the departments of archaeology and physical anthropology at UCT, and the CSRF) through a series of statements and actions — a counter-discourse — through which the remains and the site were associated with a different set of meanings, values, and histories, most notably apartheid forced removals and colonialist destruction of historic communities.

In this chapter, I explore this counter-discourse as a way of tracing the partial emergence and formation of radically new South African and African identities vis-a-vis the bones of the Prestwich Street dead. However, as much as the PPPC was a coherent and homologous subaltern counter public, characterised by a passionate will to engage the *forces of memory and identity*, it also comprised diversity in its members, sometimes competing, interests, perspectives, and positionalities, and its members invoked various languages at different moments in time as points of conceptual reference. It is precisely this critical tension, then, of the simultaneous

coherence and incoherence of the PPPC, of the PPPC as bricoleur, that constituted its responses during the Prestwich Street contestations and, ultimately, its failure to mobilise popular support for the expropriation of the site.

6.1 Context

On 25 July 2003, approximately two months after the first human remains were encountered on site near Prestwich Street, CB Jantjies — a local Cape Town resident from the suburb of Rugby — wrote a letter to the *Cape Times* in which he stated that the 'excavation of a 300-year-old slave cemetery in Prestwich Street brought back memories of [his] childhood days' (Jantjies 2003). His brief public reminiscence continues:

Back in the '60s, most of the coloured children in the Bo Kaap could but choose from two schools in the neighbourhood. St. Stephens Primary was one...The school was built on an old graveyard. I remember the number of times we unearthed skeletons whenever a hole had to be dug. Naturally, at first, it was a frightening experience. We neither knew who was buried there nor anything about the history of the place. But we came to respect them and to live in peace with them. How strange to think that many of our own ancestors could have been buried there (ibid).

In a telephonic submission to the CSRF, another Cape resident, Merwyn Dickson, asked, 'Is it possible to leave [the] bones alone? [I feel a] personal identification with who they are' (Malan 2003, Appendix, p. 6). Hanief Haider, who once lived in a house on the site where the British Petroleum filling station is currently situated, submitted a written comment to the CSRF in which she articulated her memories of playing as a child among 'scattered bones' (ibid, Appendix, p. 1). Mavis Smallberg wrote of her reaction to viewing exposed skeletons on site as 'horrific'. 'Please bury them', she demanded (ibid, Appendix, p. 4).

The extent to which a particular, if disparate, Cape Town public were beginning to make broad claims upon the site and the remains during the SAHRA public notification and consultation period was not insignificant. Indeed, had the consultation process itself been more inventive and expansive, we would most certainly be in a position to measure the nature and extent of these claims more precisely. Typically, though, claims were articulated in terms of people's individual or collective identifications with histories of slavery and the Khoikhoi at the Cape. For example, as Mogomat Faseigh Salie commented, 'As a resident and a descendant of slaves who resided in the Bo Kaap, I do not only represent myself or family, but my community. This is another example of attempts by developers not only to desecrate but destroy our heritage' (ibid, Appendix, p. 4). Yvette Abrahams wrote, 'As [an] Africa, native Capetonian and descendant of Khoi and slaves, [I] object to unburying of bodies in [Prestwich Placer (ibid, Appendix, p. 3).

Furthermore, a series of past-present associations were at that stage in a state of emergence, as individuals began to critically construct a relationship between the

exhumations happening on site and apartheid histories of forced removal. For example, Zuleiga Worth, whom I interviewed at UCT in 2005, recounted her feelings around the matter.

For me it was an insult to remove those bones. And yes I feel very angry about it because it wasn't nice to think that you were removed from Waterkant Street, and then removed from Jarvis Street, and where do you go from here?! (Worth 2005).

Importantly, the expression of this relationship is entirely absent in the languages of heritage resources management, physical anthropology, archaeology, or development, and therefore gives us an indication of the nature of the different kinds of speaking positions from which claims upon the site and the remains were uttered.

Popular sentiment of resistance and refusal began to develop a momentum following an official SAHRA decision, taken on 1 September 2003, to continue the exhumations (see chapter four) (SAHRA 2003c). This momentum was given direction by the interventions of a small group of individuals — clerics, public historians, journalists, peace activists, and museum practitioners — who collectively formed the Hands Off Prestwich Street Burial Ground Ad Hoc Committee (HOPSAHC). In a letter dated 12 September addressed to SAHRA provincial heritage manager, Beverley Crouts, convenor of the newly established Hands Off Committee, Michael Weeder, articulated the counter-position — counter, that is, to the exhumations as well as the notion of the remains as the objects scientific study. 'We, as part of the descendent community of the people represented by the skeletal remains at the Prestwich Street Burial Ground *claim* them as our ancestors and as the ancestors of the City of Cape Town.' (HOPSAHC 2003b; original emphasis) The slogan of a billboard posted by the Hands Off Committee outside of St. Georges Cathedral, a notable site of anti-apartheid struggle, declared in bold-type: 'Stop the exhumations! Stop the humiliation!' Hundreds of names of Cape slaves were inset behind the slogan, as background, 'a listing intended to give names back to the anonymous dead buried at Prestwich Street' (Grunebaum 2007, p. 214). As Grunebaum writes —

The appearance of the bodies at the burial ground pried open a time for naming, a time for assimilating the extent of the social destruction resulting from the annihilation of memory and of its topographic associations. This time for the dead heralded the memory work necessary for social justice. Memory work as naming, as listing, as recalling, as re-storying, as accounting, as deferring, as listening, as speaking, and as claiming. HOPSAHC set out to extend the brief hiatus in construction and thereby open a collective space for the politically and socially regenerative work of mourning (ibid).

A question is in order at this juncture. If, nearly ten years earlier, at Cobern Street (chapter four), the exhumation of a similar burial site passed more-or-less under the political radar, then why, at Prestwich Street, did human remains buried during the colonial era surface so powerfully in the present to evoke the kinds of public responses of memory and identity it did vis-à-vis the Hands Off Committee, and

indeed other Cape Town publics? It is this question that I would like to use as both a point of departure and a frame for my analysis and discussion in this chapter.

6.2 Analysis

At the first public meeting on 29 July, facilitator Marlene Leros invited questions from the floor following Efstathiou's presentation (see chapter three). Weeder, an Anglican priest in the Cape Town archdiocese, who would in time become one of the strongest voices of dissent to protest against the exhumations, was one of the first to raise a hand. His questions and comment immediately reflected a sense of disquiet when he introduced into public discussions notions of race, and the relationship between SAHRA, the University of Western Cape (UWC), and the University of Cape Town (UCT) viz, the public consultation and notification, as well as the exhumation, processes. An abbreviated version of his intervention appears in Malan's (2003, Appendix, p. 2) report on the PCP, as such.

What is the ownership of the process and interpretation?.. .Proposal talks of 'our history', of ordinary people, who in [Cape Town] is white and black. The presenters are largely white. At site accents are international and very white. I understand why archaeologists from UCT are involved at this stage — the question is for SAHRA — at what point will UWC and black archaeologists be brought in? At what point will 'the people' be incorporated into research...? At what point does this process move on beyond SAHRA and UCT?

Weeder (2003a) later expressed in an article published in the *Cape Times* that he 'felt that the remains were being prised from the ground to be once again shackled'.

Yvette Abrahams, an historian from UWC who has written of the life of Sarah Baartman (see Abrahams 1996, 1997), appeared suspicious of both the exhumations and of the motive behind those who called the meeting. Abrahams questioned the panel fervently. 'Is this a public participation process or a rubber-stamping exercise? How can a permit be given for bodies to be dug up before I am consulted?' (ibid).

A critical point is in order here, which relates to Weeder's emphasis on UCT, white, and international archaeologists, and the relationship between UCT and UWC. The sub-text of the statement is a long-standing, and to an extent an uneasy, historic relationship between the two universities: 'the former a liberal, English-medium institution proud of its history as a (relatively) open university under apartheid; the latter the 'home of the struggle' in the Western Cape in the 1980s, currently renegotiating its identity as an historically black university in the competitive contexts of a globalizing higher education sector' (Shepherd 2007, p. 14).

The point to be made, and UCT Deputy Vice-Chancellor Martin Hall made it recently at a workshop convened by Nick Shepherd on the subject of public histories of slavery at the Cape, is that UCT as university is comprised of multiple disciplines, departments, individual scholarly voices, and institutional interests. Therefore, to refer amorphously to UCT as one body is erroneous and further polarises the debate in

terms of UCT (versus UWC). This, I think, is not to deny the complicity of certain individuals and sectors of the university in upholding various unjust political structures (Radithalo 2007), both past and present; but rather encourages the critical dis-aggregation that is required in the determination of accountability and responsibility. That Hall made the point in the moment he did, when leading members of the PPPC were present at the aforesaid workshop, turned the cards back on the PPPC, whose members have tended to exaggerate the culpability of "UCT" in the context of the Prestwich Street contestations. The issue of accountability is thus one of the utmost importance; that is, for both strong and weak publics.

It is also therefore interesting to note that out of the eight panellists, Lucien Le Grange, who is an architect with a track record of involvement with local Cape Town heritage issues, was one of the few who problematised the notion of the surfacing of the dead as a discovery. In his presentation Le Grange made the following statement, which was also novel to the extent that it underscored the site's value in a broader South African context, and not simply in archaeological and anthropological terms, as Hart had done so minutes previously (see chapter four). Le Grange said (and here I present the quotation from a written account of his presentation):

[The] "discovery" of the burial grounds at Prestwich Place is indeed of great historical significance. Its significance transcends the academic interests of archaeologists and the building interests of developers. It is without a doubt a discovery of local, provincial and national significance (Malan 2003, Appendix, p. 2).

In his presentation, then SAHRA councillor Ciraj Rassool's position on the site's significance echoed that of Le Grange, when he too asserted that the 'matter was far too important to be left to the private relationship between the developer and the archaeologists as mediated by SAHRA' (Malan 2003, Appendix, p. 3). Rassool also made a noteworthy, if unwelcome and controversial, intervention when he suggested that the grave itself be thought of as the 'primary memorial' (Thulani 2003).

Peoples' questions and comments reflected a range of competing thoughts and feelings, which stood largely in opposition to the publicly expressed positions of those who sat on the panel. One of the key questions raised was why exhumation had been permitted to run simultaneously to public notification and consultation and in particular why the first public meeting was held seven weeks after the surfacing of remains. To this Pumla Madiba answered: 'This is a difficult and sensitive question. [We] have to weigh [the] values. It was an accident; [it was] not known whose remains lay there' (Malan 2003, p. 5). However, the framing by many of the panellists of the find as a discovery was unacceptable to many who attended the meeting.

Zuleiga Worth, whose comments are also recorded in the meeting's transcript, expressed her concern about this issue in our interview. In fact, that the find was reported as a discovery was entirely problematic to Worth, based on her own life experiences of the area in which the remains surfaced. A former resident of the Bo Kaap and pupil of Prestwich Primary School, who remembered vivid encounters of the remains of Green Point's dead during her school years in the form of popular

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myths and personal experiences,⁴¹ it was a puzzle to Worth that the burial site was not known about by the heritage authorities, not least the CEO.

Then I heard Pumla Madiba saying something like they didn't know. You know they gave a permit for digging and they didn't really know that there were people buried under there and I couldn't really believe that. I mean, how? I don't know. She didn't define what she meant by they didn't know. Maybe her definition of didn't know is different to 'cause anybody in that area knows that area is the graveyard and how the head of SAHRA (she was the CEO of SAHRA at the time, I don't know if she still is) for me it was just entirely unbelievable (Worth 2005).

With reference to Madiba's comment, that the discovery was 'accidental', Worth added, 'You don't go and say accidental, accidental, stand up there in a public meeting and say its accidental when the very public that's sitting there knows it's not accidental' (ibid).

In this mini-dissertation I have used the words 'uncovered' and 'surfacing' to describe the event which led to public knowledge of the presence of human remains on the site of PPRP. In doing so, I take issue with the dominant understanding that an "accident" and a "discovery" led to the surfacing of the dead. The notion of an accident not only implies a lack of responsibility and accountability, and detracts, I think, from the significance of the actual event, but is also indicative of how a colonial history of erasure led to the systematic covering over and forgetting of the graves. The notion of the city as 'built on unfinished business' (Weeder, quoted in Moodie 2003b) is one which I therefore take as axiomatic in my deployment of this formulation.

Another question raised at the first public meeting was why the panel had not been representative of the public in attendance. The facilitators, the CSRF, were rightly criticised for arranging a panel that did not consist of religious clerics or community representatives, but rather professionals and experts, who functioned in a particular relation to the attendants of the meeting. Mogamat Isaacs (2005), of the Retreat Muslim Forum (RMF), recorded his disappointment in respect of this aspect of the meeting in an interview I conducted with him in 2005.

If they had allowed or selected people from the public onto their decision-making at least there would have been input from the public. I mean we could have, easily have, you know, proposed people to be part of that. But they had on their podium your architects, your developers, your lawyers, your whatever, your archaeologists, your anthropologists, all of them... It was a thing [of] talking down to the people. That is what happened. And there was no invitation to the public to become participants in the issue.

41 As Worth (2005) recounted, 'In fact in sub-A we were told that our school is built on a graveyard and if you not careful and if you do all sorts of (I don't know what) then the spooks will come and get you. And there was this practice where if you talked too much then the teacher throws you out the class and you have to stand in the corridor. So if you stand in the corridor outside the classroom door because you were misbehaving in class then the chances might be that if you were very quiet then you might see a ghost.'

About the make-up of the panel, Zuleiga Worth (2005) said, 'When I saw who was there I looked at the time and space and I thought it was directed at the *crème-de-la-crème* of archaeology rather than a public meeting.' In a letter to the CSRF, Mavis Smallberg (2003) made the suggestion that panels at the public meetings ought to be

more community-based consisting of academics, members of the community and spiritual leaders because as I see it, the whole process is being slanted towards hard science with an absence of moral issues being taken firmly on board.

Her opinion was that,

[only] scientists are going to benefit from picking over these bones — of what purpose and use is it to the various communities to which the dead belonged to what they ate 150 years ago or where they came from? Who is it that wants to know? Why? How are their careers going to benefit from such research? And who is yet again the subject of such investigations? (See also Shepherd 2007, p. 9).

The kinds of feelings expressed by many of the meetings participants, and indeed those who submitted their comments via the CSRF's e-mail, telephone and fax lines, were feelings of anger, dissent, confusion, and disquiet, not least in respect of the suggestion that the exhumed remains be made subject to scientific observation by archaeologists and physical anthropologists. The words, images and formulations invoked, in this regard, are edifying — 'God', 'sacrilege', 'ancestors', 'grave robbers', bones prised from the ground 'to be once again shackled' — and are themselves indicative of the kinds of connections people were beginning to make between fractured colonial histories (not least histories of colonial appropriations of human remains, and histories of slavery), religious discourses, and the bones of the Prestwich Street dead (Malan 2003, Appendix, p. 5, 6).



Figure 5 — Photograph of Prestwich Primary School (source: Gerard Ralphs, personal archive).

In the light of proceedings at the first public meeting, it was decided by SAHRA to suspend exhumation work. The original exhumation permit was appropriately amended to provide an 'interim cessation of work' until 18 August 2003 (SAHRA 2003g). 'We thought it responsible', Madiba said some months later, 'to react to the mood that we experienced [at the first public meeting]...There was a lot of emotion on the 29th, a lot of anger' (SAHRA 2003d, p. 7). In addition to this key decision, SAHRA extended the public consultation process for two additional weeks, until 31 August, to allow for a more extensive notification and discussion period. During this period, public commentators expressed anger at the image of the exhumations as a *fait accompli*. The RMF faxed a letter, written by representative Imam MN Davids, to the CSRF, where he spelled out the forum's interest in the site and its position in respect of the ethics of the exhumations.

Having made the historical connection between the Muslims of the Cape with the Khoi in the context of the Sarah Baartman Project, we view the exhumation of old graves of our forebears as a serious violation of our dignity and honour (Davids 2003, p. 1).

Davids also made a connection between the role of UCT in the exhumations, ostensibly vis-a-vis the CSRF and the ACO, and the university's past involvement in lending credence to the apartheid practice of forced removals.

The role played by UCT brings back memories when the same institution was called upon by the authorities in Apartheid offices to seek a "scientific" basis [sic] for the declaration of District Six as a "slum area" and ready to be declared a "white area" resulting in the social, cultural and economic destruction of Cape Town's inhabitants, now mainly impoverished and victims of an unjust tyrannical regime. We call on UCT not to forget the past (ibid).

The Anglican Diocese of Cape Town stated its official position following the first public meeting, in a 'unanimously accepted' resolution of the Sixty Sixth Synod of the Cape Town Diocese of the [Anglican] Church of the Province of Southern Africa.

That this Colonial-era burial ground is a significant site of memory for those South Africans who have been cut off from their ancestral roots during slavery and because of other forms of colonial conquest inflicted upon the city's poor. The first public participation meeting has highlighted the need for a considered reflection on the future of the Prestwich site and that of the human skeletal remains associated with it. Furthermore, this synod affirms that the sanctity of life does not diminish with death and that the grave should be a 'resting place, peaceful and secure (Weeder 2003).

The message from the Diocese was clear and unequivocal. 'We therefore call upon: The appropriate institutions and organisations to be guided by African values and customs with regard to exhumations, burials and cemeteries' (ibid).

The second public meeting was held on Saturday 16 August 2003 at Alexander Sinton High School in Crawford. For a second time, the meeting was facilitated by Leros, who was assisted by Shawn Johnson of the organisation Common Ground Consulting. The meeting began at 10h15. The venue and time of the meeting are important as they are both indications of the CSRF's effort to provide for a more inclusive process of public consultation. However, unlike the relatively well-attended first public meeting, only forty one people attended the second.

As was the case at the first public meeting, the value and significance of the site was a point of contestation. Michael Weeder argued that the 'site should be seen in the context of the Bill of Rights and the Constitution' —

These rights cannot be set aside for economic urgency...The remains are sacred to [a] broader community, [this is] not a narrow issue or just a Cape Town issue. [We] need to embrace the memory associated with the bones (Malan 2003, p. 9).

Later in the meeting, Weeder (Malan 2003, p. 10) made the distinction that the site was of 'theological' rather than 'archaeological' significance. This discursive shift, from the language of archaeology to the language of theology, represents an important intervention by Weeder. I think it signifies, quite unequivocally, the hardening of a public heritage counter-discourse articulated in terms of at least four different epistemological elements: biblical and theological knowledges, African customary notions around rites of passage in death and the treatment of the grave, the South African Bill of Rights and Constitution (human rights discourse), as well as public histories of slavery. Importantly, the formation of this counter-discourse emerged out

of an impulse to directly challenge what by then had become an accepted script for the process — exhumation for the purposes of development, study of the remains for the purposes of science, and reburial and memorialisation at an alternative site — and would cement itself in the Prestwich Street contestations early in September with the emergence of the Hands Off Committee.

The Hands Off Committee

In a press statement, dated 11 September, announcing the formation of the Hands Off Committee, as a direct response to the decision to continue the exhumations, Weeder drew attention in dramatic language to the need for '[communities] in and around the city to absorb the magnitude of this violation of their history, and to mourn' In a powerful statement articulating the meanings of the burial site and its significances, the Committee wrote that the 'Prestwich Street burial ground represents a site of genocide' (HOPSAHC 2003a). The Committee also criticised the public consultation and notification process as wholly inadequate: 'the manner in which this was done gives an indication that a public rubber-stamping of a preferred course of action was being sought by SAHRA' (ibid). The conception of public consultation the PPPC advocated was one of consultation and participation in the broadest sense. In an interview between Christian Ernsten and Michael Weeder, Weeder explained the PPPC's ideas around public consultation.

You got to go to their churches, you got to go to the soccer clubs, you got to go where people meet and talk to them. So we talking about public participation as a campaign of information. And within the process of information you are unlocking their own repressed memories, which a lot of people associated with that area. So you start entering into a dialogue so they tell you what they remember, their understanding of their past. And out of that you come up hopefully with a coherent alternative for 'what do we do now'. So you really engage the community. That is what we understand by public participation (Weeder 2005).

Local and national newspapers at the time were a hotbed for public opinion and comment. Statements reflected residents of the city — and indeed citizens of the nation at large — grappling publicly with notions of race, identity, slavery, and the relationship of the disciplines of archaeology and physical anthropology to the site and its remains. The events around the surfacing of the Prestwich Street dead seemed to bring to the fore a series of silently lurking social, political, and historical issues facing the city of Cape Town. Weeder was reported to have said, 'The ownership of Cape Town is in white hands and black people are airbrushed from the city. The burial site is one way to recognise black people and their contribution to the city' (Moodie 2003, p. 11).

I would like specifically to pick up on a debate that erupted between a leading member of the Hands Off Committee and District Six Museum practitioner, Bonita Bennett, and an archaeologist of the South African Archaeological Society.

Viljoen's article 'Archaeologists vital in uncovering truth about slave graves' (Cape Times, 6 October 2003) defended the discipline of archaeology and its role in the disinterment process. Representing the Western Cape Branch of the South African Archaeological Society, some of whose members were involved in activities on the Prestwich Street site, Viljoen argued stridently for the exhumations.

Those who have been critical of their [archaeologists] involvement have perhaps lost sight of the fact that without these archaeologists, we would know absolutely nothing about the people who were buried there...It is only through careful excavation and recording methods that it is possible to say with confidence that most of the burials on this site are in coffins and that of the 342 found, five or six have decorated teeth and have been securely identified as first-generation immigrants.

In Viljoen's purview archaeology is instrumental in gaining access to the past. Otherwise, 'we would know absolutely nothing'

In response to Viljoen's article, Bennett advocated an alternative way of understanding the burial site and its remains. In her letter to the *Cape Times* on 9 October, 'Reburial insensitive'. Bennett also suggested that the Hands Off Committee's call for an end to the exhumations 'should not be seen as a rejection of archaeology as science.' Instead, 'it should be seen as a call for an acknowledgment of the social, historical and cultural significance of the discovery as well.' (ibid) Bennett's view was that '[while] archaeology has much to offer in terms of forensic analysis, for us it is not the overriding consideration when decisions are made about the future of the site and the remains...As descendants of these people whom we claim as our forefathers, our plea is for a sensitive handling of the living memories of those who feel connected in various ways to the discovery.' (ibid) Bennett's core criticism of archaeology was that it 'is a framework which does not allow for the wealth of knowledge that can be obtained through undocumented, oral histories which have been unlocked in this very process. It does not acknowledge the value of popular memory.'

JZ Matthews's response to Bennett a week later, 'Secrets of Prestwich Street remains may be lost while debate rages on' (Cape Argus, 15 October 2003), urged Bennett, alongside the rest of Cape Town, to 'Wake up!' Matthews wrote: 'We have been presented with a golden opportunity to learn about our forefathers, but the remains are being left to disintegrate in the open air because a minority of people have turned it into a political ball game.' Therefore: 'For the benefit of those of us who want to better understand our history, our culture and our society, we need to proceed quickly with the exhumation of the remains — before their secrets are lost to the elements.'

Inevitably, this fleeting debate between Viljoen, Bennett and Matthews, is a tiny offshoot of a larger global debate around the relationship between science and society, which I have already alluded to (chapter four). As one scholar with a critical and nuanced view on this debate, Jasanoff (2005, p. 197) makes the point that science does not occur in a vacuum but is politically situated; yet, in many cases, science and

scientists appear to practice and perform science without a self-consciousness of this positionality. 'Science enters the political playing field', she writes 'seemingly shorn of values and prejudices; automatically coded as a 'public good', it offers no further justification for its existence, nor feels any need to expose its internally generated agendas to wider public inspection' (ibid). If the methodological procedures of archaeology and physical anthropology — disinterment, accession, storage, sample labelling and categorisation, numbering, testing, handling, and the like — were precisely the research processes that the PPPC mooted, then what kinds of knowledges did the PPPC bring to bear on the site and its site?

The following three quotations are examples of the different forms of expression we find articulated by the PPPC in the Prestwich Street archive.

I think they [SAHRA, the development team] couldn't understand the fact that we are really claiming as Africans, not as a minority group, we not a minority group, as Africans we are saying this is how Africans approach the dead, approach memory, approach the grave (Weeder 2005).

I've been interested in and been one of the agitational forces in trying to get a grasp, a real solid handle, on the early history of the city and especially the way we relate to, as a nexus of the international slave trade, because we are a creolised people, we a port city, we are a culture that has been forged between the indigenous people, localised continental migrations, colonialism and the effect of colonialism, which is its most glaring and most disturbing manifestation which was chattel slavery. That is the crucible that forged the people today who form the core of Cape Town's population. It is out of this crucible that a person like myself, what you call the coloureds, the creoles... The anthropologists from the university came down and they wanted to just put the bones in a museum and study them. I was one of the people who said 'these are our ancestors, this is a grave,' you know, 'we are people of the faith, of meaning of culture, we manifest all of those elements that show that we are a developed and advanced and civilized people. Civilized people don't just desecrate graves, don't just treat there ancestors with that disrespect (Khoisan 2005).

In a neoliberal market economy, the social impact of rapid urban change and its lived effects in the everyday as shaped by the global economy lag behind changes in the cityscape. On the fault lines where multiple temporalities of change are entangled with normative modes of domination, subordination, and disavowal, the opportunity for a countertemporality, a time of the dead, opened. The possibility of a politics of restoration, of naming, claiming, and reckoning, that after long years of insult and indignation constituted a humble yet beautiful promise of historical justice necessitated, however, that the burial ground and the bodies buried there remained intact (Grunebaum 2007, p. 214).

The discourse of the PPPC included terms, phrases, concepts, notions, and scripts from various knowledge frameworks. The PPPC drew more-or-less at random on various Christian rituals and biblical references (quotes from scripture, prayers, rites of passage); a general language of human ancestry as sacred; academic criticisms of science, archaeology, and physical anthropology; urban historical discourse; anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggle languages (and methodologies); and the language of an essentialist Africa. Prayer meetings, poetry readings, picketing, acts of naming

the dead, all discourse practices that we find articulated by the PPPC in its attempts to reach out to the spectres, the ghosts, of the Prestwich Street dead. In a sense I think a fitting image of the PPPC during the period of the Prestwich Street contestations is the image of the bricoleur (Hebdige 1988).

6.3 Discussion

What were some of the key interventions of the PPPC during the Prestwich Street contestations? How were these interventions made possible, and within what networks of knowledge and communities of practice was the momentum of these interventions sustained (or lost)? Indeed, to what extent does Fraser's formulation, the notion of the subaltern counter-public, adequately characterise the PPPC?

I think the first important point to be made is that the set of regulations and protocols set out in the NHRA for the treatment of previously unknown burial grounds does not encourage individuals and communities with an interest in such sites, unless, that is, such individuals and communities are able to demonstrate absolute proof of direct descent, to claim ownership of such sites. Jonker (2005) has explored this as a critical issue in the jurisprudence of the NHRA.

Ownership is also a particularly thorny issue, as the case of the Prestwich Street burial ground illustrates, when the burial ground is located on private property. The insurmountable financial interests at play — to both SAHRA and the PPPC — in the development of The Rockwell, and the defensive strategies of the development team, did not encourage a constructive national engagement with the question of whether the remains ought to be left *in situ* or exhumed. Moreover, that key decisions were simply taken, such as the decision to grant an exhumation permit prior to public notification and consultation, made contesting such decisions unfairly difficult. For these reasons, the PPPC, and indeed any other individual wishing to see an alternative outcome on site, were at a significant disadvantage from the very outset. If knowledge is relational, as I demonstrate in my example of Sissy Jupe in chapter one, then the dominant discourses of development, but also archaeology, physical anthropology, and heritage resources management, then the raw, emotional, partially formed, emergent, institutionally unsupported public heritage counter-discourse of the PPPC, was the subjugated, subaltern knowledge, which found only partial recognition amongst a select combination of individuals.

The positions adopted by the PPPC throughout the Prestwich Street contestations I think cannot be seen as independent of both the politics and methodologies of the District Six Museum; the particular focus of which has been the reconstruction of the historical community of District Six using the memories and stories of its ex-residents. A radically people-centred approach has been at the fore of the museum's museological approach since its inception in the 1990s, whereby ex-residents are invited to inscribe their names, and the names of their family members, onto the very walls and floors of the space (Rasool and Proselandis 2001). The

experience of re-membering District Six over the fifteen years, I think, has provided powerful impetus for the strong symbolic connection drawn by the PPPC in both of their appeals was that the exhumations of the dead echoed the forced removal of communities of people from Green Point during apartheid.

The formation of the Hands Off Committee is preceded by a number of prior interventions, most notably the December 1st Movement, the Hands Off District Six Committee, which was responsible for preventing the redevelopment of a white, middle-class suburb on the land that was once District Six (Soudien and Jeppe 1990), and, of course, the District Six Museum. The activities of the Hands Off District Six Committee and its antecedents, the District Six Association and the Friends of District Six Campaign, have been framed by Crain Soudien (1990, p. 144) in terms of a 'theology of protest' in reaction to attempts at the appropriation of the embattled land: an appropriate formulation in thinking through the activities of the Hands Off Committee and the PPPC.

However, if the PPPC demonstrated an abundance of energy and enthusiasm in contesting the exhumations and removal of the dead from the site of their interment, then the weaknesses of the PPPC, ultimately, were structural. In an interview with Christian Ernsten in 2006, Ciraj Rassool (2005) made the following point, which underscores the extent to which the PPPC were fractured.

[The] Prestwich Place [Project] Committee are an ad hoc committee of different interests — religious, political, ones that are concerned about urban history, about the history of Cape Town, its kind of patterns of settlement of disruption and removal, and some of them understand the Prestwich experience within that framework, some of them are religious people and understand the sanctities of the grave and think about it [in that way]. So you've got very different politics.

In an interview between Weeder and Ernsten, Weeder recounted how membership of the PPPC was adopted on a voluntary basis, but also on a secondary basis. Moreover, the limitations of time and financial limitations meant that the PPPC could not mobilise the support of a wider Cape Town public. As Weeder (2005) admitted, 'we lacked the capacity to draw the people to the issue!'

Conclusion

This chapter has explored some of the activities, statements, actions, decisions of the Hands Off Committee and PPPC. My argument is that the major contribution to the contestations over the Prestwich Street burial site, on the part of this emergent subaltern counter public, was predominantly that of laying the discursive foundations for an ethics of critical heritage practice based on experiences of violent pasts, but also, based on a sense of hope and light for different futures. I am reminded of one of Mbembe's key assertions in his essay, 'African modes of self-writing' (2002a, p. 239), that part of the challenge of theorising Africa differently is precisely the

challenge of situating 'human misfortune and wrongdoing in the same theoretical framework'. We might add to this the following — 'in the context of a future structured by a politics of hope'.

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Conclusion

Post-apartheid spectres

I would like to conclude this mini-dissertation with reference to recently deceased philosopher Anthony Holiday's perceptive commentary on the Prestwich Street exhumations, 'The "living dead" return to haunt the "new" South Africa' (Cape Times, 30 July 2003). In this anomalous article Holiday opened up a series of interesting possibilities in respect of the relationship between the Prestwich Street dead and the present, between the histories of colonialism and slavery in South Africa and their contemporary legacies. His approach to reading and writing the dead was not one of closure or definitive conclusion, but rather, one of curiosity and fascination, of open-endedness.

How far has the alienating legacy of slavery afflicted us with one of the world's highest crime rates? Is the beguiling intimacy of slave sexuality, in which masters, mistresses and their human "property" share a forbidden fruit, at the bottom of our special inability to deal with the Aids epidemic? Has the "miracle" of the birth of the "new" South Africa perhaps less to do with "magic" we superstitiously attribute to Nelson Mandela than with the street wisdom and willingness to strike a deal which our enslaved ancestors used in order to simply survive? (ibid)

Holiday ended the article on a profound note when he suggested that the Prestwich Street dead 'gesture wordlessly towards such enigmas.' (ibid)

If, in Holiday's reading, the bones of the dead have the potential to lead the nation into a profound reflection on the intimate links between its pasts and presents, then the opening question from which I departed in the preface to this mini-dissertation (what are the meanings of the unnamed dead in a (South) African present?) is one which remains to be interpreted through the creativity of scholars, writers, artists, performers, and the like vis-à-vis the Prestwich memorial currently under construction. The recent dance production *Cargo*, and David Kramer and the late Taliep Petersen's *Ghoema* figure as two, I would argue, successful attempts to re-figure slavery in a contemporary Cape Town context using the medium of performance Yvette Christianse's debut novel *Unconfessed* (2007) is another. The ABG multi-disciplinary research and memorialisation projects will undoubtedly hold a number of important lessons for those responsible for the development of memorialisation and research activities around Prestwich Street. Yet the more pertinent question to this mini-dissertation, the second question from which I began my research, is how the contestations around Prestwich Street have given shape of the

post-apartheid public sphere, in response to which I have a number of concluding remarks.

A four-sided frontier

Consider the following quotes. The first, a transcription from Christian Ernten's oral interview with Michael Weeder (2005); the second, a transcription from Ernten's interview with Michael Philippides (2005).

And it was really while I was on the burial site ground that I had a clear sense of discomfort and ...saw how the old and privileged of Cape Town society — academia [from] the...University of Cape Town, capital in the person of the developer, and an array of SAHRA, the heritage people — so all the key players were found that day on the site, you know. And I think that gathering, drawn together with our different understandings of memory, of identity, and of our history, and our different experience of it, just sharpened my sense of injustice of what the site represented.

My impression was that it was a little bit short-sighted of the Hands Off Committee in their demands...They were very emotional in terms of 'it's our people, it's our heritage, it's our past' ...For one particular group to claim ancestry on the basis of a feeling I think is out of line I think also to stall the discovery of the history of people in South Africa I think is also wrong. You know we know so little about our history...To deny research of your past is closing the book.

How do we reconcile these two competing perspectives in the context of the thinking through place of the Prestwich Street dead in Cape Town's present? On the one hand we read of Weeder's 'sense of injustice' at seeing the different 'key players' on the site that day; and, then, of Philippides' irritation at the short-sightedness of the emotional Hands Off Committee, on the other. What of notions of memory, identity, reconciliation, transformation, and power of heritage to shape our national character?

The debates, contestations, and battles that I have sketched out in this mini-dissertation signify a range of forces in operation in the post-apartheid public sphere. I have characterised these forces in this mini-dissertation as the *forces of erasure*, the *forces of exposure*, the *forces of containment*, and the *forces of memory*; each of which corresponds to the languages of development, archaeology and science, heritage management, and public heritage respectively. The particular interests, to which these languages correspond, I would like to suggest, can be characterised in a four-sided frontier.

Thus, where the interests of the development team were clear from the outset, to continue the work of 'developing the site', the interests of the PPPC lay primarily in blocking the progress of further development for the purposes of creating a meaningful on-site memorial for the dead — importantly, based on a process of community consultation and reflexive research. When their acts of resistance and refusal failed following two formal appeals, the PPPC made every effort to ensure that the bones of the dead were protected from further invasive scientific procedures.

In turn, the particular scientists whose research proposals for the scientific study of the remains were officially rejected, articulated their anger and disappointment at what they perceived not only to be the short-sightedness of the PPPC and SAHRA, but also, ironically, the PPPC's unwillingness to engage in further discussion. The scientists main contention was that the histories that are written into the bones would be silenced, buried or, in the formulation of Alan Morris, 'destroyed', if the bones were not studied using physical anthropological methodologies. The PPPC responded to this way of seeing and knowing the dead with an invocation of human rights discourse, religious discourse, Africanist notions around the dead and the grave, and different archives of historical knowledge.

The battle raged on other fronts. The nation's and the city's heritage managers, as well as the CSRF, were engaged with the task of managing the heritage uncovered at Prestwich Street, in what figured as a series of uninventive attempts to balance the interests of the developer, archaeologists, scientists with the interests of the residents of the city of Cape Town, and the South African nation at large. Heritage management tasks involved an exhumation permit, public notification and consultation, and appeals, behind all of which lay not only millions of Rand, but also, the history of the colonial underclasses and the spirit of the NHRA in the context of South Africa's heritage transformation agenda.

The forms of disciplinary praxis vis-à-vis archaeology and physical anthropology were also brought into question during the exhumation process, specifically by members of the PPPC, as well as those critical of the exhumations. So too was the relationship between the University of Western Cape and the University of Cape Town, and the institutional politics associated with the relationship between the two universities.

The battles over the bones of the dead, the range of forces behind which I have described in this mini-dissertation, gave rise to what I want to term *a field of displacement*. In this field of displacement we find two prevailing dynamics: on the one hand, we find the partial, uncertain, yet obvious, articulation of radically new South African and African identities based on histories of slavery, colonialism and apartheid, and the coming-full-circle of these histories in the present vis-à-vis the surfacing of the bones of the dead. On the other hand, we find these new identities under fire by the very forces that claim, albeit authoritatively, to know the South African past — the disciplines of archaeology and physical anthropology, and the discourse of heritage resources management.

If, indeed, there is a set of core philosophical and methodological challenges for the Prestwich memorial site, then these will undoubtedly lie in the creation of a space for the fuller emergence and articulation of these new, post-colonial, identities, as well as in the creation of room for the critical interrogation of current disciplinary histories, knowledges, methodologies, and the power such disciplines have over the making of the South African past. What, specifically, would this twofold project entail?

Let me begin with the latter aspect. Disciplines themselves are complex entities, comprised of numerous, individual voices, different localities and centres of theory and practice, competing methodologies, multiple paradigms of thought, and various ways in which these are understood and interpreted in local and global contexts. Yet, disciplinary discourses cohere around a set of core guiding ideas, modes of understanding, and forms of praxis; Foucault's notions — discourse and of the system of dispersion — are useful ones in this regard (chapter one). For the locally practiced disciplines of archaeology and physical anthropology, then, Prestwich Street is an 'uncomfortable' (yet I would add a necessary) 'place to be' (Shepherd 2007a, p. 25). It is 'cutting edge' (ibid) precisely because it invites into the disciplines the hard questions and sometimes difficult realities of violent colonial histories of erasure, desecration, and destruction. A Prestwich memorial site must ask, and contest, these questions and realities, and in doing so urge the disciplines themselves to take due cognisance, to acknowledge, to engage, with alternative forms of practice.

In respect of the former aspect, the Prestwich Street frontier as I suggest in my introduction offers scholars, students, and the like, an opportunity to read a sense of newness and novelty emerging out of the post-colonial moment. At the nexus of a series of clashing epistemologies, a series of competing publics, weak, strong, subaltern counter publics, a series of self-styling individuals and collectivities, in the complex, contested space of the city, in the postcolony, in African space-time, it is here that we see the cogs and wheels of the nation in the making. It is here, in the space of the battle that we also witness the moments of strength, resilience, tenacity, in the face of uncertainty and an unevenness of power. I am reminded of the notion of the spectre, the ghost, the voice of the past in the present, and a fitting formulation: 'Swirling, heterodox, contested: the energies of the Prestwich Street are still among us' (Shepherd 2007, p. 24).

Appendix

A. Full Transcript of Interview with Zenzile Khoisan

Interviewee: Zenzile Khoisan

Interviewer: Gerard Ralphs

Date of Interview: 10 May 2005

Place of Interview: Independent Newspapers, St. Georges Mall, Cape Town

Length of Interview: 30 minutes

Gerard Ralphs (hereinafter GR): So can you explain how you came to be involved with Prestwich Street and the reasons for your involvement?

Zenzile Khoisan (hereinafter ZK): Well Prestwich Street is only one of a number of projects that I've been involved with that have to do with memory, that have to do with building a composite narrative of our past: the way we came to be, how we came to be, who we are, and my quest to be able to find meaningful vehicles with which we can go with a portable history into the future and have a legacy that's meaningful to hand down to our progeny.

I think for me as a journalist, I got involved in Prestwich Street because I've been involved in a number of organizations: the December 1st Movement, I've interacted with them; I've been involved with many of the Khoisan reconstructive anthropology groups, essentially people trying to decode pieces of their history that were lost, stolen and strayed; and also, I've been interested in and been one of the agitational forces in trying to get a grasp, a real solid handle, on the early history of the city and especially the way we relate to, as a nexus of the international slave trade, because we are a creolised people, we a port city, we are a culture that has been forged between the indigenous people, localised continental migrations, colonialism and the effect of colonialism, which is its most glaring and most disturbing manifestation which was chattel slavery. That is the crucible that forged the people today who form the core of Cape Town's population. It is out of this crucible that a person like myself, what you call the coloureds, the creoles, come. So I got involved in that.

Specifically on Prestwich Place, the discovery of those graves by a developer a couple of years ago, digging up there, created a great stir and sensation in that we've been warning the city fathers for a while not to forge ahead just blindly with development because in the new era there's a tendency to go for development at any cost, modernization at any cost, you know, and one of the things about modernity its got a

lot of advantages, a lot of things that come to us in a sense that assist us, that help us to make our lives easier, but it also carries with it a very disturbing manifestation which is to throw away (emphasizes) that which is our meaning, glibly. Toss it aside. And when those graves were discovered, of course there were people saying you must dig up the graves, throw the bones in. The anthropologists from the university came down and they wanted to just put the bones in a museum and study them. I was one of the people who said 'these are our ancestors, this is a grave', you know, 'we are people of the faith, of meaning of culture, we manifest all of those elements that show that we are a developed and advanced and civilized people. Civilized people don't just desecrate graves, don't just treat their ancestors with that disrespect.'

See I was one of the people that went to a public meeting and basically hauled them over the coals, screamed at them, told the head of the South African Heritage Agency, you know, to fuck off and leave our ancestors alone, and told her, you know, basically that they are grave robbers and the anthropologists want to study our people. What if we start going to fucken Europe and start digging up every fucken grave that we can find? Even today, you don't find people going and digging up any grave that they can find. You know if bones are found, we need to know what happened there, you know, and I think for me because we have such a fractured history in this country, because we have such a history of disrespecting the ancestors, of disrespecting the people who built this city, there is a tendency to go along with that old, tired narrative, and I stood against that, I was one of those people. I was part of that Hands Off Prestwich Place Project Committee at its inception, but I'm also a journalist so I have to have distance, so essentially you see if you go into the website you'll see a number of articles have been written, if you go into google there are a number of articles that I've written, but so I approach it from two perspectives: one, I approach it from the perspective of a journalist, the other I approach it as a child of the city that has a responsibility to history because those who do not learn from the lessons of history are damned to repeat those, those same disturbing acts.

So that's why I get involved. I was involved in the vigils, if you go onto the Prestwich Place website they've got poem of mine there about the ancestors, respecting the spirit of the place, and some of my thinking informed what had happened because by writing and using my position as a senior journalist, as a commentator but also as a hard news journalist, I was also able to nail down and hold a lot of senior officials feet to the fire about how they were going to handle those graves respectfully. Now I'm not only talking the graves at Prestwich Place and further down near the waterfront on the site near the BP headquarters is and recently further down there.

Actually it was if the ancestors were answering what we had put forth to these people, based on the early maps of the city and of course with the empirical data of that and also with the evidential material of the graves itself manifesting, opening up, we were able to tell them that whole area on that Somerset road, those were the graves

of the early city dwellers, the poor, the slaves, the Khoi. They go back hundreds of years. And essentially my view of that was that now they have found the graves, the first objective was to say leave the graves and build a proper place of memorial and pay out the developer. Well, between the developer and between this and between that, it's always a struggle. The city is surrounded by a coalition of the 'COB's': the real estate corporations and the bankers. That's who runs cities with the politician's, sort of playing the facilitating role. It's not necessarily true in a developing city that has history like ours, some form of struggle against the excesses of these three core interest groups, the state, the bankers...

But, essentially, sanity prevailed and so they took the, so they've re-housed them graves. So for instance I'd go, and if I found that the door was broken on the site where they stopped the development and that people were going there and smoking drugs on the site, I'd go and immediately hold the city accountable, create a hell of a stir and they'd have to come and reinforce the security and eventually they moved them to Woodstock and I think part of that agitation is that they are going to create a permanent place of memory. But I think the important thing, as was pointed out by Father Michael Weeder, (his phone number is, you know him⁹) the important thing we need to realize is that those bones present us with a challenge, a reprieve; a challenge and a reprieve. The challenge of the bones is to be able to, in a very serious way, interrogate our past, you know, and I think the reprieve is that, and I think this is purely from a level of, speaking as person of spirituality and faith, is that those ancestors speak to our humanity, speak too our level of humanity, speak too our ability. Because, if you are incapable of treating your ancestors with respect, you know, and their remains to have them in away that pays proper homage and reverence to them then you as a society have lost the plot, lost the handle essentially. That's what I can say about Prestwich Place.

GR: You say you had two different roles: one as a senior and professional journalist and the other as part of the Hands Off Committee, what was your mandate as a journalist in this?

ZK: Well, as a journalist, essentially at independent newspapers I'm a senior investigative reporter, which means that part of my function in this organization is that I have to speak truth to power and ask the hard questions, you know, you won't find me getting dog side of trees and writing little fluff pieces. You know, the equivalent of, you know, being a sharpshooter: you see the issue, you don't dilly-dally, you know hide behind bushes, you just say, "Listen here these are the graves, what is the challenge? What are we going to do?" Now as a journalist to pose the hard questions, but also to interrogate the intent of all the interest groups, including the anthropologists, the universities because they want to sit there with their little brushes and dust off these bones and objectify the bones. In a sense it like a, it can be interpreted as a certain kind of this pornographic aspect of necrophilia. It's a way of

screwing the corpses after they dead. You know, to interrogate the intent is also to say that we don't need a Stalin School of Falsification. If you got to speak about, if you got to interrogate it, it must be done with respect. You see because those bones are not disconnected from the progeny that is left here in their wake; we are the progeny of those bones. We are the living manifestation of the people who brought us here who purveyed us here. We are the descendents of those bones, of those ancestors, you see. And, as such, we have to ensure that that respect is carried through.

As a person who is interested in history and interested in defending the integrity of history, and making sure that history provides us with the necessary vehicles for negotiating our perilous present that we have, and to find a meaningful way to purvey ourselves into the future, it's important for us to pay homage to our past. So just on the level of being a human being and a person who claims those bones as part of my spiritual faith and physical ancestry, I've got a right and a responsibility to protect, defend and revere those faces where they are left. Because in life they lived difficult lives subjected to incredible acts of infamy. The life of this country, the history of Cape Town is a harsh terrifying history and it is on our faces that you find the map of all that arch belegar of port cities that reached back to mother Europe, and what has happened to us, our dispossession manifested in those bones. They are the ones who brought the first wave, the harshest wave of the onslaught, and it's my responsibility to ensure that they are not re-insulted, re-raped, re-terrorized as they lie.

GR: In terms of the public consultation process, how did you feel about that?

ZK: I think it is very insensitive. You see Cape Town presents a great challenge to these fuckers, you see. Our country is the country that has to come to grips with the fact that Cape Town is the mother city. The harshest wave of genocide was enacted here. Slavery found its nestling place here, outside my window, that's the slave block. Everyday I'm reminded of the fact that our ancestors were traded in this square which is now a market place, you know, and I felt that South African Heritage Resources Agency was trying to get this problem out of the way, going through the fucken motions, you know, and I felt that they, in many ways, they were hand maidens of the carpet baggars who strip mines this country during colonialism, raped it during apartheid, and then, now, want to carpet bag and carry off the treasures of our resting places, our graves. I felt they were almost like, in many ways, by their slight of hand, acting as the handmaiden of a very disgusting process.

I think that public consultation process should have been vast, because as a resources agency they could have used it as an opportunity to discuss the history of this country. But Cape Town is at the bottom of the food chain, because they don't want to deal with the original sin which was the genocide that happened with the Khoi, and the necessity to repair the abrogation that have happened during colonialism and also because they are wishy-washy when it comes to reparations in respect of slavery

because there are great economic interests at play here. The same little bastards that robbed and raped and pillaged during colonialism are still there: BP — British Petroleum — which is, right now, one of the institutions, that is deeply immersed in the turmoil and the conflicts of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, is also immersed here. If it's not black gold, then it's bone gold. So I think that public consultation process was in many ways a farce. It should be re-opened and I think that we as people must begin to act with dignity and to act with dignity is when we find a mass grave and I'm not talking one or two bones, I'm talking about hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of skeletons, you camp it off. You pay out. We can find billions to pay for arms that we don't need. There you can find five or six million to pay out all the little fucken developers. Go away! It's a grave. Don't disrespect.

GR: In some ways the removal of the bones has been suggested by some as echoing the forced removals that took place earlier in the 1950's and 1960's.

ZK: Yes, yes it does. It shows that we have not learnt the lessons of the past. The past was very disturbing. Our history is a history of dislocation. Because removal is not just physical removal. Removal means psychological destruction, it means unraveling the fabric of what society knits together as a blanket to gird it against the excesses of the grim reapers who have no respect for culture, no respect for faith, no respect for spirituality. And when we say that our people have a history of removal, yes our people have a history of removal but they also have a history of disintegration, of deconstruction, of self-hatred, and those bones present a challenge. The literally can act as a vehicle, as a catalyst, to bring us together again. Opportunity missed. Look I can't stay very much longer. I have to go to conference.

GR: Just a final question. How do you feel about memorialisation? What needs to happen in your view?

ZK: What needs to happen is we need to go to the old maps of the city to find where our graves are. Ok, we've removed the skeletons that have been found. What needs to happen is we need is a proper narrative of the early history of the city. We need to put resources, we need to build literally a total and independent research unit that is not interested in authoring an authorized version of the realities for the present, to make it easy. The past is not easy. The past can never be easy, the past was very untidy. But for our progeny to be able to live at peace with themselves, to be able to find the, to access the blessing that is there with this country, to be able to have a sense of dignity about how they face the world open and with a sense of self-assuredness, we need to have a composite narrative of who these early ancestors were, the lives they lived, the terrified conditions under which they died, and the acts of infamy which eventually caused them there demise, their untimely demise. And it should be in a visible place, if they can't go to the original place, then they must find a place even in the company gardens where they can be put to rest. But that is a matter of urgency. Graves left

unattended, digging up graves, can never bode well for anybody cause graves, skeletons, are not just physical pieces of historical, physical evidential material. They are actually the last remains of the spirits of those that dwell within them. Must put those spirits to rest and let them rest.

GR• Thanks very much.

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