To conclude, it seems that the 'artefacts between disciplines' contemplated by Garrow and Shove are artefacts that have been marooned between disciplines, as if held up in customs or quarantined. But with further work, more integrative in character, artefacts might actually be more successfully and smoothly transferred between disciplines than is currently the case.

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Of tribes and territories *Paul Graves-Brown*

Introduction

Do good fences make good neighbours? According to their account, Duncan Garrow and Elizabeth Shove each inhabit 'neighbouring territory' (p. 127) and are undertaking an exercise in 'intellectual tourism' (p. 127). In the process, they find that they live in 'substantially different worlds' (p. 128). It is not for me to cast doubt on the veracity of their personal experience, but I do not think it is representative of the state of 'interdisciplinary working'. Disciplines do inhabit different territories, some are quite distinct; physics and French probably share few boundaries. Others – archaeology, sociology and anthropology – constantly rub up against each other. Boundedness can be emphatic where disciplines are more 'urban', clustered tightly around specific methodologies and data; others are more 'rural', with a diversity of topics, methods and theories which are likely to overlap with other disciplines (Becher 1989). Archaeology falls into the latter category; there are wide differences of approach between prehistory, classical archaeology, Egyptology, historical archaeology or archaeological science. My impression is that sociology would also fit the rural description.

The problems arise when we try to define the boundaries of such territories, and situate ourselves within them. Do neighbours really inhabit different worlds where things, physical objects, have quite different meanings? Or is it more a matter of how academics construct their professional identities, how they define their tribal allegiances? Let us consider the toothbrush and the axe.

Having an axe to grind

From the outset, Garrow and Shove appear to have set up a straw man to exaggerate their differences. They play off the quotidian nature of the toothbrush and the oddness of the axe, despite the fact that both toothbrushes and axes exist in the modern world. By comparing a 'finished' toothbrush with a 'lump of rock' they are smuggling in a distinction which only serves to obscure the comparison of sociology and archaeology. Garrow could have provided a finished, hafted Neolithic axe. Shove could have provided a bag of PVC pellets (the raw ingredients of a toothbrush). Even a finished axe head would only be a component of a 'finished' artefact; what if Shove had only supplied the bristles of a toothbrush? Unfinished, raw materials are not the sole province of the past.

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Most people today are not likely to encounter a stone axe, but a 'finished' Neolithic axe would at least resemble a modern axe, especially if it were hafted. A naive individual can recognize an axe head as an artefact, even if they do not understand its purpose (Costall 1995, 471); as Garrow and Shove mention, stone axe heads were once considered 'faerie's weapons' (p. 127). They attempt to underline their distinction by claiming that anything not totally 'modern' is likely to seem 'out of place,' even a '1940s toothbrush' (p. 123). Yet the basic design of the toothbrush has remained pretty much the same since those manufactured by William Addis in the 1780s. Toothbrushes also have an archaeology – they are documented in accounts of the 19th-century bourgeoisie of Columbia (Gaitán 2005) or in the archaeology of the First World War (Saunders 2004). They may be unfamiliar, professionally, to a prehistorian who does not work with historical and contemporary archaeology, but this is more a product of the 'rural' character of archaeological territory than it is a matter of terra nova for archaeology. Similarly, once you get past the fact that the specific 'axe' in question is just a 'lump of rock', there is plenty for the sociologist to draw on in thinking about axes. The authors themselves mention Pétrequin's (1993) work on contemporary stone axe-makers in Irian Jaya; one might also look at other sociological studies of cutting tools (e.g. Sigaut 1991).

In setting up the dichotomy – axe vs. toothbrush, past vs. present – Garrow and Shove seem to me to be importing a whole lot of assumptions about progress and obsolescence. With the possible exception of some indigenous peoples, contemporary societies are not *stone* 'axe-based', but they are still *axe*-based in the same way that they are screwdriver-based, ceramic-based, computer-based or plastic-based (see Latour 1991, 75). People still use axes. The article seems to fall foul of what Edgerton (2006) calls 'innovation-centric' thinking. The pink and white plastic is modern, if already of a slightly dated design, the stone axe totally of the past. But in reality, where technology is in use, we find a mixture of old and new alongside one another. Modern steel axes often have plastic handgrips; the toothbrush is injection-moulded using pump technology 350 years old. Even the use of stone as a raw material is not entirely obsolete or archaic: obsidian blades are still used in surgery, the manufacture of gun flints continued into the 20th century and in some parts of Britain stone is still knapped for the facing of traditional-style buildings. Fundamentally these artefacts do not, at least in practical terms, derive from different worlds which should confound the archaeologist or sociologist.

Who are we, where do we come from?

As distinct disciplines both archaeology and sociology emerged in the mid- to late 19th century. Indeed it would probably be fair to say that this was the period in which most of the map of intellectual territory was carved up into the basic disciplinary structures we are familiar with today. Yet it would be wrong to see the disciplines as ever having had hard boundaries between them. Whilst Max Weber, Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim might be iconic figures for sociologists (Becher 1989), their portraits would not look out of place in an archaeologist's office. The fact is that sociology, archaeology and anthropology, not to mention psychology, history or geography, share a

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great deal of intellectual heritage, and currently they are seeing convergences of interests: 'Recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in technology as an object of sociological investigation ... during the 1990s technology took on a new lease of sociological life in the form of "social studies of science and technology"' (Hutchby 2001, 441). With respect to material culture, according to Featherstone (1991) the American Sociological Association finally acquired a section dealing with 'culture' in 1987.

Archaeology has, of course, always been concerned with material culture, but the areas of legitimate archaeological concern have changed markedly. Beginning with the classical world, archaeology extended its interests into prehistory and later into the medieval period. Yet, until recently, post-medieval or industrial archaeology were considered peripheral, and despite the growth in the study of 20th-century (often military) sites, there still seem to be some that consider the contemporary past as beyond the pale. Nevertheless archaeologists have been studying 'modern material culture' since the 1970s (cf. Rathje 1979).

Thus, whilst sociology has only recently moved onto the nitty-gritty of material culture, archaeology has only recently concerned itself with material culture in modern contexts. In the UK at least, both are new arrivals in this particular piece of the map. However, the permeability, not to say arbitrariness, of disciplinary boundaries is emphasized if we consider the international perspective. In the USA archaeology and anthropology are effectively parts of the same discipline. In France the material-culture theories of archaeologist André Leroi-Gourhan have been a defining influence on a wide variety of disciplines, including sociology, for nearly 40 years (Graves 1994).

The Other

Where I can concur with Garrow and Shove is in the matter of alterity. The need to get past the familiarity of the contemporary Western world is a problem encountered by archaeologists (Graves-Brown 2000; West 1998) and anthropologists (Jackson 1987) as well as sociologists. Indeed the problem has social as well as intellectual dimensions: 'For the informants, anthropologists' accounts of the home society may be regarded as partial, obvious, repeating what is known, but also idiosyncratic and trivial' (Strathern 1987, 26). Yet if we can overcome our embarrassment at specializing in the obvious, it becomes clear that 'the informants' are often mistaken, and that 'indigenous theories' can be challenged by taking contemporary material culture seriously (Rathje 1992; Schiffer 2000).

However, I think Garrow and Shove are wrong to assume that difficulty in establishing a viable sense of alterity is confined to the contemporary world. Archaeologists are always being cautioned against uncritically applying their understanding of the present in the past. Neolithic axes have been found hafted, so some kind of assumption of axe-ness seems appropriate. Conversely the Palaeolithic hand axe probably is not an axe at all, indeed it might not even be a tool in any conventional sense.

The basis for finding a sense of the other lies, I think, in setting aside what we know or think we know, and concentrating on the materiality of the things and places we study. What concerns me in the account given by Garrow and

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Shove is that they seem to suggest that there are different 'materialities' for archaeologists and sociologists (in other words, the kind of social constructivism espoused by Grint and Woolgar (1997) where meaning is 'inscribed' into artefacts) and hence that archaeologists and sociologists are making fundamentally different inscriptions. Garrow and Shove themselves seem confused on this point. Whilst they cite Woolgar's ideas and mention 'material inscription' (p. 125), they also refer to 'the "affordances" of different materials' (p. 128), a term borrowed from J.J. Gibson's 'ecological' and decidedly realist or pragmatist account of perception (see Costall 1995; Hutchby 2001). I suggest that their own account, their engagement with the physical properties of the axe and the toothbrush, confirms that while sociologists and archaeologists may have different perspectives, they still inhabit the same material world. Ironically, the debate between constructivism/relativism and realism is itself an intellectual issue which archaeology and sociology share (see Graves-Brown 2001; Hutchby 2001; 2003; Jones 2004; Rappert 2003; Thomas 1998).

However, this does not mean we should ignore differing intellectual traditions, techniques and bodies of knowledge. In archaeology there has often been a tendency towards uncritical borrowing. To take a topical example, the concept of affordance is widely used by archaeologists and anthropologists, but I get the feeling that many who use the concept are not totally familiar with Gibson's oeuvre. Gibson's work dealt with the psychology of visual perception, and should be understood in its dialectical opposition to the prevailing 'cognitivist' episteme within psychology (Costall 1995; Still and Costall 1991a). Others have worked to develop Gibson's ideas and at the same time he has been widely criticized, particularly, and probably quite rightly, for the failure of the ecological approach to encompass any kind of social dimension (Costall 1995; Noble 1991; Still and Costall 1991b). To appreciate fully the intellectual and disciplinary context of Gibson's ideas of affordance may take some effort but it is not rocket science. Not to make the effort is misguided; granted that different readers will form different interpretations, there is no point in reinventing the wheel.

Once we set issues of perspective aside, the real problem comes down to treating each other as the 'Other'. Disciplinary boundaries are not created by ideas, but by mystification of academic tribal practices (Becher 1989; Strathern 1987); only the appropriate rites of passage can allow us access to the intellectual sanctum that endows us with the mantle of archaeology or sociology. These authors in particular seem uncomfortable with interdisciplinary working; their frequent references to games, the 'school playground' and so on suggest a degree of nervousness, an uncertainty when stepping beyond the familiar tribal domain. Yet it seems to me that the essentially social and institutional bonds that define a discipline should not be 'inscribed' upon the subject matter or the intellectual history that underpins our ideas and practices. Even within disciplines, especially those of a 'rural' character, there are whole areas of which any one of us is ignorant. Trained as a prehistorian, I would not claim any in-depth knowledge of classical archaeology. Working with modern material culture, I often feel that I know far too little about historical archaeology. The things that I am ignorant of are extremely numerous, but they are not necessarily bounded by the perceived

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limits of a discipline. Indeed it can be the case that sub-tribal boundaries *within* disciplines are more of an obstacle than those *between* disciplines (Jones 2004), and we may find at times that we have more in common with researchers in other disciplines than we do with those in our own.

Conclusion: some practical consequences of tribalism

Despite my reservations about their paper, I should congratulate Garrow and Shove for venturing into the murky waters of interdisciplinary work. It just seems to me that they have misinterpreted the nature of the problem. In reality it is not any form of intellectual boundary that confronts us, but rather a system of social, tribal boundaries. As such the real problems are mostly practical. Most higher-education institutions retain a traditional departmental structure, albeit that one or two (e.g. Sussex University and the University of Linköping) have experimented with interdisciplinary teaching structures. These department-based structures necessarily mean that funding interdisciplinary work is always a problem since it will be judged peripheral or liminal. Similarly, interdisciplinary work can be considered of lower prestige than getting to grips with the 'core issues' of a given discipline. The academic struggle often seems to resemble natural selection, where the fiercest competition is between conspecifics, rather than between different species.

This pattern is naturally reflected in publication. Many if not most journals will tend to be discipline-specific, with those that accept interdisciplinary contributions being in the minority. Equally, anyone attempting to publish articles or books which break new ground outside of traditional academic territories may well fall foul of the conservatism of peer reviewers. Indeed, by its very nature, any interdisciplinary project will find it hard to identify appropriate peers.

Given these practical obstacles, one might be led to despair, yet I think that in the specific case of material-culture studies the very range of disciplines that are involved in the subject holds some basis for optimism (see e.g. Brown 2004; de Léon 2001; Gracyk 1996; Jones 2004). There must be some powerful reasons why material culture attracts such a diversity of scholarship. The real question is how we go about sharing this increasingly crowded piece of academic territory.

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Display matters *Harvey Molotch*

Garrow and Shove use objects to reveal larger social and cultural patterns, in this case – most ambitiously – epistemological and methodological practices

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