
Right to reply

Response to the Academy

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Soon after the publication of the article *Report to the academy: power and ethics in humanities research* in *Acta Academica* 48 (1), I was notified by the editors that Professor Lyn Horn, the Research Integrity Officer at Stellenbosch University and Chairperson of the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities had contacted the journal and expressed the desire to respond to the article. In the spirit of open academic engagement, the editorial board granted this request, and also encouraged me to respond in turn to Stellenbosch University's submission. I am appreciative of this opportunity, and gratified that open channels of communication and critique are being upheld and encouraged by the *Acta Academica* editorial board.

The five established academics and members of senior management at Stellenbosch University who authored the response to my article have devoted a significant amount of time and energy to their engagement with my work (not only the aforementioned article, but also the content of my doctoral dissertation), and I am appreciative of their commitment to it. Indeed, a core argument put forward in my initial article is that the possibility to engage with academic work, to express dissent and provide criticism and critique, is essential to a healthy and vibrant academic and knowledge community. By determining that I was not guilty of research misconduct, and that in spite of some unresolved issues with the work the dissertation should be made freely available (in unrestricted and uncensored form), Stellenbosch University management have guaranteed that my work may be freely engaged with by any interested parties, and I am energised by the prospect of further involvements with and critiques of my scholarly output.

The contribution by members of Stellenbosch University produced in this publication engages a broad spectrum of important texts related to topics such as ethics, research integrity, research misconduct and qualitative research methods, and adds substantively to the already existing discourse in these fields. I agree with many of the points raised in this response, although I would also continue to

argue that the particularities of specific situations warrant more contextualised applications of ethics-related theories than what is, in my view, generally the case in the Stellenbosch response to my article. While there are some points I disagree with, and while I remain convinced of the validity and ethicality of my own work, I will not attempt to comprehensively engage the entirety of the response here: this important and ongoing debate will benefit, I believe, from contributions that seek also to move beyond the specificity of a single case study and engage a broader field of inquiry. It is my hope that my own further scholarly contributions may add to this important discourse, and also that the field of ethics and research integrity may continue to be energised by critical and challenging responses to what remains a central but also contested area of our academic world.