Faculty of Humanities

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"You shouldn't have to suffer for being who you are":

An Examination of the Human Library Strategy for Challenging Prejudice and Increasing Respect for Difference

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This thesis is presented for the Degree of

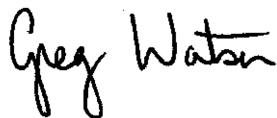**Doctor of Philosophy**

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made.

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262), Approval Number HR 132/2011

Signature:

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Abstract

The Human Library Organisation provides a grassroots strategy for challenging prejudice and for increasing respect for difference. Its method brings together people who would normally not meet and engages them in conversations about difference. Although Human Libraries have operated in over 44 countries for fourteen years, there has been little detailed research that examines the organisation and its method. This research thesis responds to that gap and examines Human Library as a strategy for engaging ordinary people in challenging prejudice and stereotypes. It advances the thesis that when ordinary people participate in Human Libraries they act at the grassroots to counter prejudice and increase respect for difference; in doing so they engage in a bottom-up contribution to the advancement of all people's full and equal enjoyment of their rights and freedoms as humans.

This qualitative research adopts the method of participant-observation to gather data at three Human Libraries around Australia (Lismore, Launceston and Perth). To enhance the role of participant-observer, the Perth Human Library was organised and run by the researcher. The data comprises 44 semi in-depth interviews in which participants, who are Organisers, Readers and Human Books, discuss their perceptions of their participation in Human Libraries. Using constructivist grounded theory as its interpretive methodology, the research renders four concepts out of its data.

The thesis theorises the four concepts and demonstrates how Human Libraries engage people in a process of countering prejudice, increasing respect for difference and promoting human rights and freedoms. The theory advances the core concept of spaces for rights and freedoms and that this is enacted via an enabling relationship that involves three process concepts: raising critical consciousness, human recognition and enabling human rights activism.

The research and its findings, therefore, provide the Human Library Organisation with a theoretical means of supporting its activist aims and explaining its contribution to the anti-prejudice movement. In addition, the theorising of these core and process concepts indicates areas for future research aimed at strengthening the organisation's grassroots practice. Finally, the findings contribute to the ongoing scholarly discussion of the connections between social movements, activism and the modern human rights culture.

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List of Acronyms

ALIA	Australian Library and Information Association
ASRC	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
CST	Critical Social Theory
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship (Australian Government)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EYCB	European Youth Centre Budapest (Council of Europe)
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans/Transgender, Intersex and Questioning
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NSM	New Social Movement
SM	Social Movement
SMO	Social Movement Organisation
SNR	Sanctuary Northern Rivers
TAFE	Training and Further Education
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background to the Study

The pluralistic nature of modern day Australia demonstrates the fact that "living with difference is an unavoidable part of social experience in the twenty-first century" (Ang 2008, 230). How people perceive and respond to each other plays a pivotal role in how they live with difference, treat other people and shape their societies. This highlights the need to find ways to help people live with difference and to respect difference so that people can live lives worthy of humans. This research project contributes to that need via an examination of Human Library, a grassroots organisation that uses a method of one-on-one dialogue to challenge prejudice, increase respect for difference and promote people's rights and freedoms at the level of the local community.

Examples from the last few years illustrate Australian responses to living with difference and the way that language is used to shape people's response to difference and the sorts of societies we construct. A range of factors, including the language used by Australia's political leaders, influences how people and their differences are perceived and treated by others in Australia (Pedersen, Watt, and Hansen 2006; Every and Augoustinos 2007, 2008). For example, during the 2013 federal election campaign, the leader of the Coalition, Tony Abbott, framed his response to asylum seekers with the slogan, "stop the boats" (Rourke 2013). In the aftermath of the Coalition's election, former Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Scott Morrison instructed departmental and detention staff to call asylum seekers "illegal" arrivals and "detainees" (Yenko 2013). When Australia's terrorist alert was recently raised to high, a few politicians agitated to "ban the burqa" in Federal Parliament. At the same time, however, the Australian Government is calling Australians to get behind "Team Australia" (Summers 2014). Such language symbolises "the calibre of the public conversation" (Aly 2014) and influences people's day-to-day conversations and how we treat each other; how language is used contributes to how people experience everyday life as freeing or marginalising and whether or not people live a life worthy of a human (Warner 2002; Valentine 2007).

There are many other individuals and groups within Australian societies whose experiences of living with difference are influenced by language used in this manner. Michael Kirby (2010), former Justice of the High Court of Australia, notes the following: Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islander peoples (particularly in remote communities), refugees and immigrants, children (especially the most vulnerable), people with disabilities, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender, intersex and questioning (LGBTIQ), and women (especially regarding career paths). He also emphasises issues deserving renewed attention: xenophobia, bullying, multiculturalism and a lack of consultation with Indigenous communities. Like Kirby, other people shine a light on the importance of attending to the way language helps construct contexts that disrespect people who are perceived to be different.

Mariam Veiszadeh (2014), of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC), states:

> Everyone in Australian society has an important part to play in ensuring that we do not cause irreparable damage to social cohesion by engaging in divisive rhetoric and inciting hysteria. That includes parliamentarians.

Jana Favero, also of the ASRC, recalls being told by Labor and Coalition politicians to "[c]hange the electorate first and then we'll follow" (Tsiolkas 2013). Kirby (2010, 101) expresses his vision of what such change means:

> What I think we have to build is a society of acceptance; acceptance that we are diverse, that one in six children are being bullied because they are overweight or for some other reason and that acceptance is the state that is beyond tolerance to the point where we can accept the diversities, and I think that is something which we should all be aiming at.

These observations regarding Australia's response to difference are at the heart of what motivates this research. They elicit questions that deserve an informed response. How can every Australian play a part in diminishing divisive rhetoric? How do people change the electorate and encourage politicians to follow? How do we move others and ourselves beyond tolerating difference to accepting it? Moreover, because these questions seek to involve every Australian in changing the electorate, they highlight an approach that focuses on the role that 'ordinary people' play in countering prejudice and increasing respect for

difference. 'Ordinary people' refers to people who do not hold positions of high office or possess specialised qualifications or training related to anti-prejudice work or formal human rights processes. Ordinary people are the majority of the population; they are our friends, family members and colleagues with whom we interact on a daily basis. The majority of the participants in this research are ordinary people.

Responding to the questions raised by Veiszadeh, Favero and Kirby concerns the way people talk about each other because that affects how people treat each other. Gordon Allport (1954/1979, 15) warns of the impacts of the use of language:

> From the point of view of social consequences much "polite prejudice" is harmless enough – being confined to idle chatter. But unfortunately, the fateful progression is, in this century, growing in frequency. The resulting disruption in the human family is menacing. And as the peoples of the earth grow ever more interdependent, they can tolerate less well the mounting friction.

Language acts overtly and covertly in individuals and their communities as a growing, disruptive force within the human family. It is made evident by the dehumanising language applied to asylum seekers and acts of schoolyard bullying and it expresses racism, homophobia and discrimination against people with physical and mental impairments. Prejudice, expressed in the verbal negativity of idle chatter, provides a breeding ground for discrimination and the abuse of humans' rights and freedoms and it demands a response (Jackman 2005).

The prejudice that people are forced to endure on a day-to-day basis results from individuals and societies that refuse to live with difference or do not know how to respond to difference. Treating people with prejudice ignores that, as stated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), "[e]veryone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other states" (United Nations 1948, Article 2). People who live with discrimination, as the result of prejudice and stereotypes, are engaged in a daily struggle to attain and enjoy their rights and freedoms as humans. Their experience should remind us that human rights do not originate in philosophy and law but rather they emerge as struggle concepts in the everyday lives of ordinary people

(Stammers 2009) and that it is often the case that the most marginalised express what is meant by human rights most vividly (Ackerly 2011)

The Human Library Organisation engages people who are the targets of prejudice and stereotypes as volunteers in its method of countering prejudice and increasing respect for difference. These volunteers are not political leaders, qualified negotiators or human rights experts. They volunteer at events known as Human Libraries and take on the role of Human Book and engage their Readers in conversations about difference to increase people's respect for difference. Human Libraries present an avenue for examining how people can respond to "living with difference [as] an unavoidable part of social experience in the twenty-first century" (Ang 2008, 230).

Research Question and Objectives

This research project is interested in how people contribute to the construction of societies that increase people's respect for difference and promote the enjoyment of lives worthy of humans. It responds to the societal reality that living with difference is unavoidable and how people live with difference shapes the way we enjoy our rights and freedoms. Human Library offers a concrete response to this societal phenomenon and, therefore, provides a means of examining how society can respond to difference in a way that respects people's rights and freedoms.

The research question is:

What does an examination of Human Library inform us about how people can challenge prejudice and increase respect for difference as a means for promoting humans' rights and freedoms?

The research objectives are:

1. To explore how participants in Human Libraries understand their experiences as Human Books, Readers or Organisers.

2. To investigate how engaging in Human Libraries challenges prejudice and promotes respect for difference.

3. To explore Human Library as a means for promoting human rights and freedoms.

Several issues shape this question, its objectives and how this research responds to them. Firstly, the research responds to Veiszadeh's (2014) assertion that "everyone has a part to play" in advancing social cohesion. The majority of people who participate in Human Libraries do not have any special qualifications or skills in the field of human rights or in anti-prejudice strategies. They signify that group of people throughout Australia that constitutes the majority of "the electorate" which the politicians claim they will follow. Secondly, it examines prejudice and stereotypes because they are expressions of "divisive rhetoric" and they impede respect for difference. Thirdly, it situates itself within the context of the modern human rights culture because prejudice and discrimination diminish people's enjoyment of their rights and freedoms. Moreover, the research focuses on the grassroots level and represents research that values people's day-to-day experiences of human rights and uses this to inform its practice (Fleay and Briskman 2011). It values the grassroots contribution that people make to the realisation of human rights and freedoms, especially in the absence of extensive human rights legislation, as in the case of Australia. Fourthly, this research acknowledges the recognition that the Launceston Human Library received as a human rights organisation. On 10 December 2014, as part of celebrations that marked Human Rights Week Tasmania 2014, the Hobart City Council awarded the Launceston Human Library the Human Rights Organisation Award (A Fairer World Tasmania 2014). The award is given to an organisation that has acted to ensure the promotion, protection and fulfilment of human rights. Launceston Human Library received the award for "creating an open and respectful place within the community where people can listen to stories that help to challenge prejudice and discrimination and that promote empathy, understanding and respect for human rights and diversity." This recognition provides further demonstration of the need for this research into Human Library. In addition to these issues, three terms are central to this research and the discussion of its findings. The following paragraphs on human rights, prejudice and stereotypes are offered as basic introductions to terms that are at the heart of this research thesis; they are not offered as exhaustive definitions. A more detailed consideration of these terms and the categories of prejudice will be provided in Chapter 3.

Definitions

Human Rights

The term human rights is used to cover a great variety of claims by those engaged in everyday struggles. In essence, they are the rights one has due to being human (Donnelly 2007; Orend 2002). Jack Donnelly (2012, 19) explains that human rights "are held by all human beings, irrespective of any rights or duties they may (or may not) have as citizens, members of families, workers, or parts of any public or private organisation or association." They are the rights one requires to live a life worthy of a human (Donnelly 2013). However, reflecting an understanding of human rights as struggle concepts, a proliferation of language is used to discuss human rights and this can cause one to wonder whether or not there are actual universal human rights or if there simply exists a language of human rights (Ackerly 2011).

While human rights indicates a broad range of claims, activists demonstrate considerable consensus that human rights are about social, political and economic obligations, as well as the attainment of legal entitlements. Activists also agree that human rights activism must aim at attaining the long-term promotion of every person's rights enjoyment (Ackerly 2011). The language adopted in conventions and treaty documents since the creation of the UDHR demonstrates "a clear trend toward the goal of human rights law as being the *"full and equal enjoyment"*[1] of human rights, not just formal institutionalisation of those rights" (Ackerly 2011, 225). But as Brooke Ackerly (2011, 225) reminds us, "legal entitlements may secure human rights, but these entitlements are not the rights themselves. Rather human rights are realised in their *enjoyment.*" This is demonstrated when social norms prevent people from realising their legal entitlement to their rights. It is made manifest, for example, when people and communities allow child labour, ignore the abuse of women, encourage discrimination against sexual minorities and remain silent in the midst of racist jokes and taunts. Responding to this reality by engaging people in dialogue about issues that are related to entitlements and how to promote rights enjoyment includes them in a process of understanding human rights as struggle concepts (Stammers 2009). Ackerly (2011, 236) states the necessity of finding ways to engage in the struggle for human rights enjoyment:

> Grounded universal human rights cannot be comprehended in substance through reflection about what rights *are*. We cannot even comprehend them in

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[1] Whenever emphasis appears in quotations throughout this thesis, it is the original emphasis. Emphasis is not added to any quotations throughout this thesis.

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substance through *shared* discussion and reflection about what rights *are*. In order to understand human rights, we have to understand the practices that promote their *enjoyment*.

This examination of Human Library contributes to our understanding of how practices promote human rights enjoyment at the most fundamental level of society: the everyday lives of people. It does so by focusing on Human Library's anti-prejudice strategy.

Prejudice and Stereotypes

Prejudice and stereotypes are central to this research project because they provide a breeding ground for discrimination and the abuse of humans' rights and freedoms (Jackman 2005). Allport (1954/1979, 7) describes prejudice as "an avertive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group." Subsequent scholarship has resulted in social psychologists adopting a minimalist definition of prejudice as "an overall negative attitude toward a group" (Eagly and Diekman 2005, 20). Allport (1954/1979, 14) argues that prejudice needs to be addressed because "any negative attitude tends somehow, somewhere to express itself in action. Few people keep their antipathies entirely to themselves. The more intense the attitude, the more likely it is to result in vigorously hostile action." The participants in this research encounter prejudice in its many forms, particularly as ableism, homophobia and racism, and they also demonstrate the intersectional nature of prejudice. While prejudice and stereotypes share common ground they are not interchangeable.

A stereotype, according to Allport (1954/1979, 191), is "an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify (rationalise) our conduct in relation to the category." Stereotypes act as "a screening or selective device to maintain simplicity in perception and in thinking" (Allport 1954/1979, 192). As such, stereotypes "shape thoughts, feelings and actions" (Dovidio, Glick, and Rudman 2005, 4) and provide those who use them with a required justification for their negative beliefs and attitudes.

To further illustrate the place of prejudice within this research project, the following briefly introduces four manifestations of prejudice encountered by the research participants:

ableism, homophobia, racism and the intersectional nature of prejudice. These categories will receive greater attention in Chapter 3 which discusses the literature that is relevant to the various elements within this research thesis.

Ableism

Ableism indicates how people who live with impairment also live with the experience of social exclusion. This results from the way stigmas function within the social construction of what is deemed normal and how the term 'disability' is attached to people as a form of prejudice. Such stigma is not limited to physical impairment but also extends to mental illness (Arboleda-Florez 2005; Corrigan and O'Shaughnessy 2007). Countering prejudice expressed as ableism is a response to the way "[n]egative messages about impairment and disability are so taken for granted that they pass unnoticed" (Morris 2001, 5).

Homophobia

Homophobia refers to prejudice attached to sexual identity, which contributes to a general attitude of intolerance. It is the result of a worldview that regards heterosexuality as normal and natural and judges homosexuality to be abnormal (Flood and Hamilton 2005). Countering homophobia responds to the fact that prejudice that is aligned with sexual identity operates even where legal provisions are in place to promote equality for sexual minorities. For example, even though it is unlawful in Australia to discriminate against a person on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status, the Australian Human Rights Commission (2013) still finds it necessary to state:

> [L]esbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse and intersex (LGBTI) people in Australia can experience discrimination, harassment and hostility in many areas of everyday life.

Racism

Racism is the application of false beliefs based on race and is expressed in numerous ways such as aggressive behaviour, verbal abuse and racist jokes. An expanding concept in racism is 'new' or 'modern' racism (Pedersen et al. 2005). 'New' racism is set apart from 'old-fashioned racism' because it expresses discrimination in a way that allows the speaker to express racist views while simultaneously denying that the views are racist. New racism acts

to exclude, oppress and demonise minorities while employing discursive strategies that present such views as 'not racist' (Every and Augoustinos 2007). Obvious examples include comments that begin, "I'm not racist but…" Countering racism, including new racism, not only confronts obvious racism but also brings to light and challenges the way discourse can operate as simultaneously racist and 'not racist.'

Intersectionality

Prejudice is not limited to discrete categories, such as the three above; it is intersectional. A national survey completed in the United Kingdom in 2003 demonstrates this. It required respondents to self-identify as feeling less positive towards at least one minority group. The survey found that people's responses to some groups overlapped. Sixteen per cent acknowledged such an attitude towards three or more groups. Gill Valentine (2010, 523) explains:

> The four minority groups which produced the most negative responses were: refugees/asylum seekers; travellers/gypsies; people from minority ethnic communities; and lesbians and gay men. The survey found a particularly strong correlation between the holding of racist and homophobic views: people who were prejudiced against any minority ethnic group were twice as likely as the population as a whole to be prejudiced against lesbians and gay men.

The intersectional nature of prejudice is demonstrated by the way it is directed at various combinations of minorities (Valentine 2010). It emerges in the midst of "the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations" (McCall 2005, 1771). Unifying these elements, Lisa Bowleg (2012, 755) offers this definition:

> Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that examines how multiple identities such as race, gender, sexual identity, socioeconomic status (SES), and disability (to name a few) intersect at the level of individual experience (i.e., the micro level) to reveal multiple interlocking social inequality (i.e., racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism) at the macro social-structural level.

An individual person does not represent one identity alone and no single identity can explain the experience of prejudice without including the intersection of other multiple social identities (Bowleg 2012). This research project examines how people counter such experiences of prejudice via their participation with the Human Library Organisation.

Introducing the Research Subject: Human Library

This research project examines the Human Library Organisation and its strategy of engaging people in challenging prejudice and increasing respect for difference. Human Library is described by its proponents as "an innovative method designed to promote dialogue, reduce prejudices and encourage understanding" (Human Library 2012e). The method is illustrated by this example taken from promotional material used at the first Human Library event:

> Don't judge a book by its cover: especially when it's not a book. Borrow a person you normally would think you would not like. We have a wide selection of unpopular stereotypes. Everything from gays to hip hoppers to immigrants. Take a walk, have a talk or don't (Human Library 2012a).

The Human Library founders developed their method based on this conviction:

> It's easy to have prejudices about another group of people from a distance, but far more difficult to maintain the stereotypes in direct personal contact with someone. We often heard things like 'I hate immigrants, but Mohammad from my school is okay because I know him' (Abergel et al. 2005, 15).

Human Library unites active Organisers from all parts of the world to promote its method and create more social cohesion and respect for diversity and human rights (Human Library 2012c). Since 2000, the Human Library method has spread throughout the world, including Australia.

Human Library traces its origins to Denmark, 1993, with the creation of *Stop the Violence,* a response by a group of young friends to violence and racial tensions among youth. *Stop the Violence* developed its Living Library[2] method of face-to-face dialogue as a mechanism for reducing tensions at the Roskilde Festival in 2000. At this event the European Youth Centre Budapest (EYCB) recognised that its approach to human rights, which aimed to engage citizens in human rights through knowledge and awareness, resonated with the anti-prejudice efforts of Living Library. EYCB's endorsement of the method contributed to Living Library's expansion across Europe from Denmark to Hungry, Norway, Portugal and beyond.

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[2] Until late 2010 Human Library operated as Living Library. Throughout this thesis the name will be used that matches the period of time being discussed; however, it should be understood that Human Library and Living Library refer to the same organisation and method. Some of the research participants have had a long involvement with Human Library and continue to refer to it as Living Library during their interviews.

The one-on-one dialogues used by Human Library are referred to as readings and they take place at events known as Human Libraries. At these events, volunteers take on the role of Human Book. Using their experiences of prejudice and stereotypes, they create their own titles and descriptions. Readers select from these titles and read their chosen Human Book in a one-on-one dialogue. Using this strategy, Human Library aims to provide individuals the opportunity to confront their prejudices and increase respect for difference and human rights.

The Human Library Organisation officially arrived in Australia on 3 November 2006, with the launch of Lismore Living Library in northern New South Wales. The response to the launch was enthusiastic enough to establish Lismore Living Library as a regular event on the first Friday of every month. Like the Human Library founders in Denmark, the original Organisers of Lismore Living Library intended it as a means to counter prejudice and stereotypes and increase respect for difference.

The Human Library Research Literature

To date, five studies of Human Library have been published, two by librarians and three by academic researchers. These studies address the strong feelings expressed by Organisers, Human Books and Readers that Human Libraries make significant impacts but that there has been limited research into these widely held views (Dreher and Mowbray 2012). These studies will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 3 along with a discussion of literature that deals with a number of topics that are of particular relevance to the study of Human Libraries. This includes a discussion of the literature associated with contact theory, including research developments and the current state of intergroup contact research. Chapter 3 will also discuss literature that deals with a number of concepts that have been advanced by the five studies on Human Libraries: adaptability; spaces; micropublics and cosmopolitanism; and attitudinal change. The following, however, restricts itself to a brief discussion of the gaps in knowledge that each of the five studies seeks to address as well as what they find to be the significant impacts made by Human Libraries.

Before introducing those contributions, it is worth noting how one of the studies is unique because it provides support for the way that this research has included the role of participant-observer. The research team of Kazuhiro Kudo, Yuri Mothohashi, Yuki Enomoto, Yuki

Kataoka and Yusaku Yajima (2011) adopted research methodology that involved them as participant-observers who ran and organised a Human Library. Doing so enabled them to draw on their own experiences, as well as participants, in analysing the perceptions of the Human Library's participants. This method of inductive research enabled the team to immerse itself in the Human Library and examine previous assertions by participants about their feelings about Human Libraries. The study, therefore, addresses some existing knowledge gaps associated with participants' strong feeling that Human Libraries have a significant impact by asserting three major findings related to participants' attitudinal change. Firstly, Readers report an increase in their knowledge, understanding and empathy regarding their Human Books. Secondly, Human Books recognise an increase in self-reflexivity. Thirdly, the student Organisers tell of being able to transcend *Self–Other* imaginations (Kudo et al. 2011).

A number of researchers (Kudo et al. 2011; Garbutt 2008; Dreher and Mowbray 2012) note the similarities between the Human Library method of one-on-one dialogue and Allport's (1954/1979, 281) intergroup contact theory which contends that prejudice "may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals." For example, the assertion that participants exhibit attitudinal change as the result of increased knowledge and empathy resonates with research findings about intergroup contact (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Al Ramiah and Hewstone 2013). However, such elements as these, which are used within contact theory offer ways of interpreting some participant perceptions, other criticisms directed at contact theory deem it ineffective as a framework for this examination of Human Library (Pettigrew 2008; Pettigrew and Tropp 2011). Kudo et al. (2011, 4) did not include contact theory as part of their research because they believed it would limit their focus especially given the "rudimentary nature of Human Library research to date." In response to the criticisms of contact theory, Rob Garbutt (2008) and Dreher and Mowbray (2012) discuss the usefulness of other theories for examining Human Library. Of particular interest is Garbutt's (2008) argument that micropublics and cosmopolitanism are useful concepts for justifying Human Library as a strategy for long-term change.

In addition to the above findings, the five studies focus on Human Libraries as adaptable and as spaces for addressing prejudice. For now, it is sufficient to outline what each topic indicates. Firstly, the studies discuss the Human Library method as adaptable across

locations and purposes. While its aim is to counter prejudice, it can be used to provide authoritative and unique sources of information, bring people together who share common experiences and focus its attention on specific groups of people. Secondly, Human Libraries are spaces for countering prejudice. This raises questions concerning the relationship between Human Libraries, the social spaces in which they are set and their anti-prejudice activities.

The findings presented by these five studies indicate several research gaps pertaining to Human Library and provide cues for this research. Firstly, it responds to studies that call for further examination of the claim that Human Libraries bring about attitudinal change (Rendall 2009; Dreher and Mowbray 2012). Specifically, it adds to the findings offered by Kudo et al. (2011) regarding attitudinal change. Building on these findings through an examination of participants' perceptions of their involvement in Human Libraries, this research examines how these perceptions indicate how people interpret their participation in Human Libraries as a catalyst for attitudinal change. Secondly, the finding that the Human Library method is adaptable raises questions about how this affects Human Library's anti-prejudice objectives. What are the outcomes of this adaptability regarding countering prejudice and increasing respect for difference? Does the adaptability of this method enhance or impede Human Library's aims? Thirdly, this research responds to the need for greater knowledge regarding the finding that Human Libraries are spaces for anti-prejudice activity. This research examines participants' perceptions of Human Libraries as a means of appreciating what sort of space Human Libraries provide and how they interact with other social spaces.

Beyond these three avenues of examination, this research responds to a fourth gap left by the previous studies regarding method. Some of the studies include a minimal representation of participants' voices by gathering data via evaluation forms, group discussions and some interviewing. The result is that participants' voices are often absent. This research responds to that by employing an interview method that includes each type of Human Library participant as well as interviewing Human Books and Readers that have engaged in readings together. This method ensures that participants' voices are at the heart of this research and thesis. This research is the first study of Human Library to include the voices of Human Library participants in this manner. This enables the research to illuminate additional gaps in

our knowledge of Human Library that only participants' insights can provide. Finally, in offering these responses to the existing body of research literature, this research makes its contribution to the need for research that provides the Human Library Organisation with theories that are useful for justifying it as a strategy for local anti-prejudice activism (Garbutt 2008). Beyond offering a response to these gaps indicated by the Human Library literature, this research also contributes knowledge to a number of other research areas.

Human Library claims that its anti-prejudice strategy is aimed at encouraging increased respect for difference and human rights. This research project examines how increasing respect for difference is linked to human rights via Human Library's anti-prejudice strategy. Examining this claim contributes to the body of knowledge regarding the relationship between social movements and human rights. For example, Upendra Baxi (2008, xxxv) contends that there is no "adequate social theory of human rights." Similarly, Neil Stammers (2009) asserts that until the mid-1990s it was rare to find any reference to the connection between human rights and social movements and that literature dealing with human rights mostly ignored their role. This research, therefore, offers its examination of Human Library as a response to Baxi and Stammers and adds to the existing body of knowledge about the connection between social movement organisations and human rights. In particular, it contributes knowledge about how ordinary people engage in social movements to promote the enjoyment of human rights that are mainly egalitarian in character (Waters 1995; Ackerly 2011). The participants in this research project illustrate how this is so for people who struggle against such prejudices as ableism, homophobia and racism. It contributes knowledge about what people can do in their everyday lives to engage in the human rights dimension of social movements and their work for justice (Fields 2010).

Methodology

This research project positions itself within the interpretive tradition and uses constructivist grounded theory as its lens for focusing on its phenomena (Crotty 1998). Constructivist grounded theory regards data and analysis as products of the shared experiences of researcher and participants. This approach engages the research participants in interpreting their experiences at Human Libraries and the researcher then interprets the participants' interpretive work and renders four concepts out of the data.

Constructivist grounded theory is "a way to learn about the worlds we study and a method for developing theories to understand them" (Charmaz 2006, 10). While noting the seminal work of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) and later developments by Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1994), the research relies on scholarship by Kathy Charmaz (2006, 2011, 2014) that "provides a way of doing grounded theory" and views "grounded theory methods as a set of principles and practices, not as prescriptions and packages" (2006, 9). Charmaz's approach values the diverse nature of social research and recognises that it is often necessary to use grounded theory guidelines in conjunction with other methodological assumptions and approaches. Constructivist grounded theory analysis commences with a process of qualitative coding, which labels segments of data in a way that emphasises what is occurring within the scene being coded. Next a process of separating, sorting and synthesising codes into analytic categories is undertaken and, finally, theoretical concepts are constructed.

The process of theorising and discussing the constructed concepts employs an interdisciplinary approach and draws on numerous scholars. However, within this body of scholarship the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire (1996, 1973, 1998b), which will be introduced in Chapter 4 and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, is particularly useful as part of the process of "rendering the world sensible" (Gergen 1985, 270). Freire's (1996) critical pedagogy advanced the field of critical theory as he engaged in working for social transformation and the study of efforts aimed at its attainment. Freire's (1996) critical pedagogy denotes "a complex philosophy, politics, and practice of education" and demands "a clear ethical and political commitment to transforming oppressive social conditions" (Roberts 2000, 13). As such it resonates with this research and the practical knowledge that underpins the Human Library because it too is a response to oppression and marginalisation made evident by day-to-day experiences that impede people's enjoyment of their rights and freedoms.

Freire's concepts also resonate with social movement theory because, like social movement theorists, Freire situates himself in his social historical context and approaches his work of historical development 'from below.' For example, in the *Preamble* to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1996, 19) states:

> Thought and study alone did not produce *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*; it is
> rooted in concrete situations and describes the reactions of labourers (peasant

and urban) and of middle-class persons whom I have observed directly or indirectly during the course of my educative work.

Along with sharing this point of departure, Freire and social movement theorists overlap in their theoretical conceptualising. For example, when social movement theory refers to people constructing their identities (Touraine 2002; Polletta and Jasper 2001), Freire's concept of humanisation comes to mind. Similarly, the social movement concepts of creative social praxis and expressive activism (Stammers 2009; Maddison and Scalmer 2006) have much in common with, and benefit from, Freire's use of dialogue and critical consciousness. A more in-depth discussion of how these Freirean concepts contribute to this research into Human Library will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Drawing on Freire's critical pedagogy does not suggest that it offers a method or system of practice which may simply be adopted in the pursuit of human rights; he discouraged such thinking (Macedo 1994). What it does illustrate, however, is that Freire's critical pedagogy offers human rights proponents and activists and people involved in social movements, like those involved with Human Library, a critical pedagogy that may be adapted or re-invented (Roberts 2000). This is exactly what Freire advised Donaldo Macedo during a conversation on the use of his critical pedagogy in the United States: "[a]sk them to recreate and rewrite my ideas" (Macedo 1994, xiv). Elsewhere, Freire (1993, ix) remarks that such efforts at reinvention are "exceedingly productive work."

While the founders of Human Library may have had no knowledge of Freire's critical pedagogy, their strategy, which arose out of their desire to respond to acts of oppression and marginalisation that were embedded in concrete everyday experiences, resonates with Freire's (1996, 26) assertion that "[t]his then is the greatest humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well." In stressing this historical task, Freire emphasises the importance of avoiding an outcome in which the oppressed "become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restore the humanity of both" (Freire 1996, 26). This is pursued via "a pedagogy which must be forged *with*, not *for* the oppressed" (Freire 1996, 30). This historical task is present in the activist methods of *Stop the Violence* and then in the Human Library.

Thesis Map

Human Libraries, like regular libraries, embody knowledge and encourage learning. A significant way in which each of them does this is via the provision of stories. This thesis shares in that approach and has its own story to tell which provides knowledge and learning that unfolds chapter by chapter. The thesis is constructed via a relationship between researcher and participants as they interpret their experiences of Human Library and it invites its readers to engage with it and learn from it. It is told in the following way.

Chapter 1 provided the exposition of our story and presented the details and knowledge that are necessary for opening it and entering into it. Chapter 2 introduces the subject of this thesis and explains what a Human Library is and how its method of one-on-one conversations functions. It also introduces the main characters within the Human Library story, the Readers and Human Books, and explains their roles. The chapter tells the story of the birth of Human Library, its life in Denmark and how it moved across Europe and arrived in Lismore, Australia. Finally, it draws on the voices of those who knew the Human Library in its early years and explores their stories.

Developing the story of Human Library, Chapter 3 turns its attention to the small body of detailed research about Human Library. This research tells the stories of those who have participated in Human Libraries in Australia, Canada and Japan. Their perceptions not only inform us about the meaning of Human Library but they also raise questions about its adaptability, what sort of spaces it provides and the possibility it holds for encouraging attitudinal change. The chapter goes beyond the confines of the Human Library and discusses research and scholarship about prejudice and anti-prejudice strategies, including a critical discussion of contact theory. It focuses on research literature that examines how prejudice manifests as discrimination aimed at impairment, sexuality and race as well as the intersectional nature of prejudice. As such the chapter demonstrates how Human Library is a story of anti-prejudice activism that functions within a community of stories dedicated to the same end.

The story told throughout this thesis is not passive; it does not allow some people to speak while others listen. It, therefore, requires tools and skills that enable a dynamic relationship between telling and listening. Chapter 4 unpacks the tools that are necessary for doing this in a way that encourages the construction of knowledge. It introduces its instrument, a

constructionist epistemological framework. The chapter explains the cross-disciplinary and contextual nature of constructionism as well as the preferred approach to human rights as constructed. Finally, it welcomes a fellow-storyteller, Paulo Freire, into the research project. Freire's philosophy of liberation education as an approach to critical theory and a tool for constructing meaning in this research is outlined as the story further unfolds.

As the story nears the point in its journey when it prepares to engage with its wider cast of characters, the participants of Human Libraries, it prepares for how it will interact with their stories. Chapter 5 explains the frames it will adopt to bring their experiences and interpretations into view, in particular the two frameworks of social movements and Freire's critical pedagogy. These bring key scenes closer into view and facilitate discussion of concepts produced via the methodology of constructivist grounded theory.

Chapter 6 explains how this story has been constructed and the steps that have been taken in doing so. It explains how the various elements within the story have been gathered, organised and interpreted throughout a process of reconnaissance, observation and participation. At its heart are the stories of those people who have participated in Human Libraries in Launceston, Lismore and Perth. Their stories are the product of how they interpret their experiences of Human Libraries and how, in turn, their stories are interpreted via the methodology of constructivist grounded theory. In addition to this, the chapter explains the empathetic role adopted by the interviewer/researcher and how it indicates his bias in favour of the method of one-on-one dialogue as a means of anti-prejudice activism as well as the fact that, after the completion of the interview process, he accepts the voluntary position of contact person for Human Library in Australia. As such, the researcher engages in the study as an advocate and partner while engaging in the co-creation of knowledge with the research participants.

Having provided the foundations, tools and structures that have been necessary for constructing this story of Human Library, Chapters 7 to 10 turn their attention to the telling of the Human Library story as a series of stories that are told and interpreted in partnership with people who have participated in Human Libraries as Organisers, Human Books and Readers. These chapters provide discussions of the research results by engaging the stories that participants have created from interpreting their experiences of readings at Human

Libraries and the theorising and discussion of concepts that are rendered from their rich experiences. This draws on research and scholarship by a diversity of thinkers, representing an interdisciplinary field of research. These four chapters, therefore, analyse participants' interpretation of their perceptions of their Human Library experiences and result in the rendering of one key concept and three process concepts which are used to theorise what it is that Human Library achieves as it pursues its anti-prejudice aims. To this end, the key concept of spaces for rights and freedoms is advanced and then developed via the three process concepts of raising critical consciousness, human recognition and enabling human rights activism. Rather than indicating four independent concepts, these concepts represent a dynamic interrelationship that explains what Human Libraries achieve and how this occurs. Therefore, while it is necessary to present these concepts via their own chapters, it should be noted that each concept is in intimate interaction with each of its companions. The relationship that is developed by these processes demonstrates how people who participate in Human Libraries act at the grassroots to counter prejudice and increase respect for difference and, in doing so, they engage in a bottom-up contribution to the advancement of people's full and equal enjoyment of their rights and freedoms as humans.

Chapter 11 brings us to the conclusion of this research story. It emphasises the knowledge and the knowledge gaps that have been produced by previous studies of Human Library and it recalls the cues that these studies indicate as points of interest for this research project. It restates the key concept of spaces for rights and freedoms and its enabling relationship with its three process concepts of raising critical consciousness, human recognition and enabling human rights activism. Finally the chapter recommends future research possibilities.

Chapter 2: What is the Human Library?

This chapter introduces Human Library as a method for countering prejudice and stereotypes and as an activist organisation that continues to grow throughout Australia and the world. Human Library is described by its proponents as "an innovative method designed to promote dialogue, reduce prejudice and encourage understanding" (Human Library 2012e). It aims to challenge prejudice and stereotypes, create more social cohesion and increase respect for difference and human rights. Originally founded by a group of young friends in Denmark in 2000, Human Library has grown into an international organisation within the anti-prejudice movement. It has been present in Australia since late 2006. Human Libraries Australia describes itself as:

> [A] national strategy for connecting and strengthening local communities through conversation. Through conversation, communities are brought closer together, attitudes changed, prejudice and fear reduced, and social inclusion is strengthened. It is a simple yet powerful strategy for building social cohesion between diverse community members who wouldn't ordinarily meet (Human Libraries Australia 2010c).

What happens at a Human Library?

Human Library enacts its method of countering prejudice and stereotypes through conversations at events known as Human Libraries. Human Libraries function in a similar manner to traditional libraries, with one notable difference: Human Libraries do not provide their readers with books; Human Libraries provide their readers with humans who take the place of books. When Readers visit a Human Library they 'borrow' people who become their 'books.' Essentially, Readers attend a Human Library and 'read' humans who are the Human Library's books. Human Books represent groups of people who are the targets of prejudice and stereotypes because they are perceived to be different. Readers select their Human Books from a catalogue, which provides a list of titles and descriptions.

A 'reading' means that a Reader and their chosen Human Book engage in a conversation. As the aim of Human Library is to help reduce prejudice through dialogue, one of the central objectives of Human Libraries is to encourage Readers to select Human Books that represent

Readers' prejudices or use of stereotypes. This enables Readers to engage in conversations about their prejudices and use of stereotypes with people who represent their prejudices and stereotypes. They are able to engage in a conversation with a person who they would otherwise not meet or with whom they would not speak due to prejudice and stereotype. The Human Library provides the Readers and Human Books with a safe space in which to meet and talk about difference. A number of examples serve to illustrate the workings of a Human Library more clearly.

A young woman who has become aware that stereotypes are often applied to Aboriginal Australians, and who may even want to consider her own use of such stereotypes, would be able to visit a Human Library and read a Human Book who is an Aboriginal Australian. Examples of locations for Human Libraries include public libraries, festivals and schools, among other possibilities. The Reader would attend a Human Library and look through its catalogue of Human Books to see if the library includes a Human Book that suited her interest. She may find, for example, that the catalogue includes an Aboriginal Australian as one of its Human Books. She might even discover that the Human Library has several suitable titles from which she can choose: *Indigenous Dad*, *Noongar Nathan* and *Woman, Lawyer & Aboriginal Australian*. The Reader would consider the description that each book has provided and choose one. Having made a selection, she may then read her Human Book. In this setting, the Reader discovers the opportunity to gain greater knowledge about one particular Aboriginal Australian and to have a discussion with this person about what it is like to be an Aboriginal Australian.

An additional example could be an elderly woman who has cause to reconsider why it is that she finds the idea of gay marriage unacceptable. Perhaps she has had an experience with a family member who has told her he is gay and one day he would like to be married and believes it is wrong that this is not legally possible in Australia. Confronted with this reality in her own family and her own life, she may now feel less comfortable with her views and want to find some way of better understanding her own attitudes and her relative. A Human Library could provide this woman with the opportunity to find a Human Book that responds to her experience. Borrowing a Human Book who is homosexual would offer her the chance to ask questions she has never felt able to ask because she did not know where to go to do this. Perhaps she has even feared voicing her thoughts and questions because they are not

allowed or welcomed in the various contexts of her daily life. In a reading with a Human Book who is homosexual this elderly woman is able to find a safe environment in which to engage in a conversation with a receptive member of the group for which she holds some prejudice. In this setting she may now ask about such things as why people who are homosexual would want to marry, what it is like to be homosexual in Australia, and to find out how this particular person understands relationship. In this conversation she is able to interact with a person who is homosexual and compare her experience to the prejudices and stereotypes she has used to form her attitudes towards lesbians and gay men.

These two examples provide a glimpse of what can happen at Human Libraries. They highlight how the skilfulness of the Human Book, along with the safe space in which Reader and Human Book engage in conversation, can provide a setting that will allow a Reader to make the first tentative steps along the path to confronting and reconsidering attitudes associated with prejudice and stereotypes. Via this quite simple strategy, Human Libraries aim to provide individuals with the opportunity to confront their prejudices and to promote social cohesion through strengthening respect for diversity and human rights (Human Library 2012c). This aim originates in an earlier project created by the founders of the Human Library.

Stop the Violence

To gain an appreciation of the philosophy that underpins the objectives of Human Library it is necessary to consider how it was developed and formally established. It commenced with a group of young friends struggling to make sense of pointless violence. In Denmark in the autumn of 1993 the friend of five young people, Dany Abergel, Asma Mouna, Christoffer Erichsen, Thomas Bertelsen and Ronni Abergel, almost lost his life as the result of a brutal knife attack. Shocked by this personal encounter with increasing violence in their society, particularly among teenagers, the friends decided to raise awareness among their peers and educate Danish youth about the increasing incidents of social violence. This resulted in the formation of the non-government youth organisation, *Stop the Violence*.

The stabbing of the young group members' friend was just one of a series of serious incidents reported in the media around that time. Ronni Abergel recalls three deaths between

April and December as examples of what the founders of *Stop the Violence* recognised as the foolish use of violence by Danish youths to solve simple problems (Abergel personal communication 19 September, 2012). One of the violent incidents involved a nineteen-year-old male who was killed outside a nightclub while trying to stop a fight. Abergel's other two examples indicate more serious social issues. The first occurred at Copenhagen's main train station and involved the stabbing of Kenny Hansen, a sixteen-year-old, Danish born and raised with a mixed ethnic background, who died in the arms of his best friend. Abergel (personal communication 24 January, 2013) describes the killer:

> [A] fifteen-year-old, Danish suburb, lower middle class with social issues in near family and mental challenges himself. An abused and victimised sort. With that expression on his face of one that seems not to have his emotions entirely in order.

The second death occurred shortly before Christmas outside a school party. Sixteen-year-old Adam Hansen, lost his life in a knife incident with a fifteen-year-old boy; both boys were of Danish ethnicity.

These incidents present three issues: those involved were young men who used violence as a way of dealing with a problem associated with social interaction; most of the youths were of Danish ethnicity although at least one event included a young male from a mixed ethnic background; at least one of the young men is noted to have had other social issues relating to family, abuse and mental health. Abergel's recollections demonstrate the sort of violence that was occurring among Copenhagen's youth when *Stop the Violence* was founded. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the social context at the time, it is necessary to consider the wider societal context of Denmark.

The Danish Context

Denmark has long considered itself "humanistic, enlightened and tolerant" (Enoch 1994, 284). This self-image is often supported by referring to Denmark as it existed prior to the 1960s. Until that time the only significant minority was a relatively small and ethnically inconspicuous Jewish population, a reality which defined Denmark as a largely, ethnically homogenous society.

This shifted dramatically in 1967 when Denmark welcomed economic migrants from Turkey, Pakistan and Yugoslavia and embarked on a path of ethnic heterogeneity. The Danes referred to these migrants, somewhat derogatorily, as foreign workers.[3] They arrived seeking temporary employment but often stayed because Denmark provided better wages than in their countries of origin, free health care, schooling and other social benefits. The foreign workers were a welcome addition because they filled the jobs Danish workers considered menial and unattractive during this period of full employment (Enoch 1994; Wren 2001; Togeby 1998; Gasshold and Togeby 1995). Within this context foreign workers were not only welcome as a necessary means of managing Denmark's strong economic climate, they were also admired as a pleasant ethnic curiosity.

The 1970s saw an end to this period of economic strength and Denmark suffered rapidly increasing unemployment. A shift in attitudes surfaced during this period, which Lise Togeby (1998, 1141) explains:

> Since the middle of the 1970s the new manpower has been 'superfluous' and a large section of the foreigners are supported by welfare. Some Danes regarded the foreign workers, and later on the refugees, as an economic burden on Danish taxpayers.

These attitudes fuelled the fear of immigration and encouraged the reawakening of Danish nationalism (Wren 2001). Karen Wren (2001, 142) observes that this shift in Denmark's attitude was part of a "recent wave of racism and xenophobia that has swept over continental Europe." This notwithstanding, by the 1980s Denmark was accepting refugees, mainly from the Middle East (Togeby 1998). Wren (2001, 152) draws this conclusion concerning Denmark in the 1980s:

> [A] period of relatively severe economic crisis and unemployment, but also of relatively relaxed refugee legislation. It was commonly perceived that refugees were benefiting from Denmark's generous welfare provision, while Danes were suffering economically. Refugees became the scapegoats in an emerging racist discourse, being viewed not only as external to the needs of the Danish economy, but also as a financial and social burden.

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[3] Wren (2001) discusses how terms like 'foreign worker' are used to describe immigrants and their offspring across generations and how they operate as part of the process of 'othering' because they are used to highlight people as 'different.'

This racist discourse, arising out of the lack of demand for foreign workers, labelled the new refugees as a 'problem.'

The extent of the perceived 'problem' is questionable given that by 1985 the immigrant population only numbered between 30,000 and 35,000 out of a national population 4,500,000 (Enoch 1994). This is still the case even if Togeby's (1998) statistic, which puts the number at about 60,000, is accepted. Yael Enoch (1994, 286) provides an insight into what motivated some to label Denmark's ethnic composition a problem, explaining that "[f]or the first time the Danes are having to deal with ethnic minorities who, in respect of their culture, language, religion and physical appearance, differ significantly from the majority." This indicates how responses to difference would contribute to the emergence of contentious social issues in Denmark.

By the 1990s Denmark had consolidated itself as a multi-ethnic society. However, the negative portrayal of immigrants and refugees that appeared in the Danish press during the mid-1980s continued throughout the 1990s. A study by UNESCO of the Danish press reveals a very nationalistic and racist climate (Wren 2001). An example of this is the fact that the media promoted the discourse around immigrants and refugees as a Danish 'problem.' However, studies of different parts of Denmark reveal a variety of experiences and nuances that challenge this notion. Togeby (1998, 1149) examines the variation that occurs in ethnocentric attitudes by comparing residents in Copenhagen to those in country areas and argues that "in 1993 attitudes in Copenhagen are less ethnocentric than in all other parts of the country." Most noticeably the issues which recorded the most change regarding greater tolerance and less prejudice for residents in Copenhagen were the issues that were most prominent in the media: crime, exploitation of the welfare system and the influence of foreign cultures.

This increase in positive attitudes to immigrants in districts with high populations of immigrants is demonstrated by Togeby (Togeby 1998). For example, survey results drawn from Vestebro, which has the highest immigrant rate in Copenhagen, indicate that the attitudes of Danes living there "are in all cases less prejudiced and more tolerant than among Danes in the rest of Copenhagen" (Togeby 1998, 1149). Togeby concludes that in Copenhagen and other large cities personal experience of immigrants has informed Danish-

born residents about immigrants and this increased understanding has led to a decline in fear and prejudice. Country residents, however, lack this personal encounter and so express greater fear and mistrust. Therefore, when news stories appeared in 1993 telling a tale of immigrants and refugees as criminals, welfare exploiters and misrepresenting their cultural practices, residents in Copenhagen had a greater chance of knowing that this was not the complete story. Residents in Copenhagen were not without negative responses but their responses were less intense than their country counterparts. Togeby's (1998, 1151) research findings draw him to conclude that "[w]ith the increase in the number of foreigners in Copenhagen, the Copenhageners have become less prejudiced and more tolerant compared to people living in the countryside." *Stop the Violence* and its activist response to violence and racism in Denmark emerges out of this context in 1993 and demonstrates how Copenhageners and residents of other large cities were more prepared to move beyond prejudice and engage with people from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

The Work of *Stop the Violence*

Stop the Violence began by targeting young people aged between twelve and twenty-five years of age but its members quickly realised that their desire to prove that violence was not the way to solve feelings of frustration could only be achieved by raising awareness across all groups within society: parents, teachers, youth workers, police and friends (Council of Europe 2004). Initially the group spread its message of non-violence by organising a concert and attracting an audience of 1500 individuals. Each person who attended the concert received an invitation to join *Stop the Violence* and embrace its message of non-violence. As a result *Stop the Violence* was invited to attend institutions such as youth clubs and schools to speak directly to young people. The group learnt that speaking with people was a powerful means of delivering its message of non-violence and awareness. Within three years *Stop the Violence* numbered 7000 members and eventually grew to 30,000 members across Denmark.

Even at this early point in its development the group was able to articulate its philosophical motivation that centred around the human need for recognition:

> Our project is basically about the fight against violence as a process of understanding its nature and of the social conditions which induce it. We had learned that violence, racism, anti-Semitism and drug abuse among the youth are often [a] cry to the surrounding world: a call for recognition or a way to

find/establish an identity, or an attempt to demonstrate a position. We did not believe that anyone can become violent simply because he/she likes it. There is much more to it, a logic which may not make sense to the established society but is of a very central importance to youth (Council of Europe 2004, 29).

While the group was focused on confronting acts of violence it was also clear about its intention to help people understand the conditions that allow violence to exist without being questioned. From the beginning *Stop the Violence* was interested in creating public spaces in which people could come to recognise and respect people who are different and engage in respectful dialogue with them.

When *Stop the Violence* attended schools it aimed to provide a space that opened up the opportunity for students to shape the course of dialogue. The members of *Stop the Violence* were clear that they did not hold all the answers and they wanted to avoid constructing an environment that mimicked situations in which young people felt disengaged because they were spoken at, rather than engaged in dialogue. *Stop the Violence* was as much about listening as it was about speaking. It was hoped that by using this dialogic approach and not telling young people how to live their lives, students would listen to the members' stories and discover something that resounded with them and learn from shared experiences.

Stop the Violence's approach is illustrated by one particular visit which the group made to a school to speak with Year 7, 8 and 9 students. The school had been experiencing problems with violence among its students that resulted from five students who were bringing weapons to school. The school had tried to deal with this group by speaking to its individual members and then to their parents but this only made the situation worse. Three members from *Stop the Violence*, two males and one female from different ethnic backgrounds, attended the school and spoke to the assembled students. It became apparent that no one was going to raise the issue of the behaviour of the five students. During the course of the interaction with the students, the three guests remained very firm in their belief that accusation and punishment simply force a problem into hiding before it returns and continues. They decided that the best course of action was to invite the five students to explain their reasons for choosing to behave as they did. The students chose to do this after the session in a conversation with the visitors from *Stop the Violence*. A member of *Stop the Violence* relates the experience:

It turned out that they wanted something else to do besides go to school, because that was not enough to fill their lives. They wanted something exciting and kept mentioning the word RESPECT. They didn't have positive means to assert themselves and resorted to the easy way of a "revolt". For them it was a sign of respect when people moved aside after seeing them coming down the street. We did our best to convince them that what they were taking for respect was fear and that it was very easy to scare people. At the end we invited them to visit our offices and see if they could help in our work (Council of Europe 2004, 32).

The students accepted this invitation and became involved in *Stop the Violence*. This encounter with issues of bullying, violence and respect, which resulted in an honest and open conversation with 'troublemakers,' alerted *Stop the Violence* to the effectiveness of personal encounter and conversation as a powerful means of building understanding, raising awareness and promoting respect for difference. It indicates the very early stages of what would become the Human Library strategy for countering prejudice.

Violence, a Festival and a Library

In 2000 *Stop the Violence* was invited to the Roskilde Festival (Northern Europe's biggest summer festival) to organise activities that would "focus on anti-violence, encourage dialogue and build relations among the festival visitors" (Human Library 2012b). The festival ran for four days in July with over 150 artists performing on five stages and attracting 70,000 attendees. The invitation to offer an anti-violence activity in the context of such an exciting and popularly attended event was the signpost that moved *Stop the Violence* in a new direction. The festival became the setting for the very first Living Library. However, the creators of the method, Tobias Rosenberg Jørgensen, Sune Bang, Asma Mouna, Philip Lipski Einstein, Christoffer Erichsen and Ronni Abergel, held some fears regarding the ability of their Living Library to achieve its ambitious aims (Human Library 2012b; Pearse 2009).

The creators worried that people would not get the point of their Living Library and thought it was likely people would not want to have their prejudices challenged. They decided, therefore, that if the only thing that happened was that their 75 Human Books read each other then that would be enough. Their fears never became reality. As soon as the Human

Books were gathered in the library space, conversations sprang into action. The Organisers had put great effort into promoting the library to festivalgoers and there was a steady flow of Readers attending the library and borrowing Human Books. The fears of the creators of Human Library were put to rest, as this reflection makes clear, "[t]he policemen sitting there speaking with the graffiti writer. The politician with the young activist and the football fan in deep chat with the feminist. It was a win-win situation and has been ever since" (Human Library 2012b).

The success of the Living Library at the Roskilde Festival was noticed by the EYCB, an organ within the Council of Europe. This resulted in contact between the Living Library Organisers and the organisers of one of Hungary's major music festivals, the Sziget Festival. The result was that in 2001 a Living Library was run within this festival. Since 2003 a Living Library has been operated by the EYCB at the Sziget Festival as part of the Council of Europe's stand at the festival. The significance of this transition from Denmark to Hungary demonstrates that the libraries "could transcend borders and be adapted to different situations" (Abergel et al. 2005, 13). Additionally, the experience in Hungary allowed the development of new tools offered within the Living Library method. For example, human dictionaries were included to provide an interpretation service so that Human Books and Readers could engage in conversation despite the barrier of language difference. This made it possible for the large number of international visitors attending the festival to engage in conversations with Human Books regardless of their inability to speak the local language.

This early success resulted in a decision by Antje Rothemund, Director of the EYCB, to invite Living Library to become part of the Council of Europe's Human Rights Education Youth Programme 2003-2005, "Youth promoting human rights and social cohesion" (Council of Europe 2003). The EYCB expresses its strategy in these words:

> The philosophy of this programme contends that human rights cannot be defended by legal texts alone. They need to be protected and fostered by everyone. In order to encourage citizens to think about their own human rights and those of the Other, awareness needs to be raised in the wider public about the importance of human rights for the personal well-being of all (Abergel et al. 2005, 10).

The inclusion of Living Library in the EYCB's programme illustrates that the Council of Europe regards it as a strategy for the promotion of human rights.

The growth of Living Library proved so powerful that it took over from *Stop the Violence* which ceased to exist in 2001. Living Library had managed to take its anti-prejudice method across national and cultural borders, as made evident by its success in Denmark and Hungary, which enabled it to be used by other organisations and in other countries. During the autumn of 2002 a Living Library was organised in Oslo, Norway, as a free event in a public library. In the summer of 2004 a Human Library was run at the Rock in Rio Festival in Lisbon, Portugal, as a one-day event by a group that worked with victims of violence. It ran on a low budget with restricted operating hours and demonstrated the adaptability of Living Library:

> The Hungarian experiences with the Living Library have illustrated how elaborately it can be staged, the Nordic experiences show the different dimensions that can be present and the Portuguese experience proves its adaptability. The Living Library can probably work successfully in any country in the world, and it continues to develop (Abergel et al. 2005, 14).

Since the first Living Library at the Roskilde Festival, 43 countries have held at least one Living Library event. Many countries have several active Living Libraries that run multiple Living Library events.[4]

Living Library comes to Australia

Living Library found its way to Australia through a weekend newspaper. Sabina Baltruweit, a community activist and resident of Lismore, read an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on a Living Library in Almelo, the Netherlands, which had unveiled its plans to "lend out" people. In the article, the librarian, Mr Krol, describes his collection of Human Books and their relevance to the local community:

> "I've got several gay men, a couple of lesbian women, and a couple of Islamic volunteers. I've got a physically handicapped woman, a woman who has been living on social security benefits for many years in real poverty."

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[4] A comprehensive list of Living Libraries and their associated events is provided on the Human Library website: http://humanlibrary.org/list-of-past-human-libraries.html. The present list of libraries was last updated on 25 September, 2012 (Human Library 2012d).

Mr Krol said he was especially keen to find members of the Netherlands' small Roma population after a recent attack on two Gypsy families (Rennie 2005).

The article on Living Library touched Baltruweit and triggered within her a desire to do something about nurturing peace and respect for difference in her own community:

> The article brought tears to my eyes. I grew up in post-war Germany, witnessing the devastating results of what happens when intolerance and racism is not addressed, leading to xenophobia, nationalism, and war. Living peacefully together in all our differences is so important, but unfortunately does not happen by itself. It needs to be nurtured – everywhere. And this Living Library concept, so brilliantly simple by letting people connect one-on-one, offers a quirky but very powerful way of breaking down barriers and challenging stereotypes. In this way it's helping to reduce and prevent racism and xenophobia. It's about celebrating diversity and fostering respect and appreciation of that diversity (Baltruweit 2007, 1).

This discovery led Baltruweit to introduce Living Library to an enthusiastic reception and a long-term home in Lismore.[5] The Organisers of the first Lismore Living Library discovered that people were not simply willing to timidly test the opportunity of being Human Books and Readers, they embraced the opportunity with enthusiasm (Baltruweit 2007).

From its beginning, the Lismore Living Library was about the entire community. This is demonstrated by its overall development. Baltruweit initiated the idea of a Living Library and the original Organisers were representatives from the community, Lismore City Library and Lismore City Council (Kinsley 2009; Human Libraries Australia 2010b). Their intention was to enhance the wellbeing of the local community, illustrated by an interview in *The Northern Rivers Echo* prior to the launch. Brian Taylor, an original committee member, explains the purpose of the library for Lismore:

> The great hope of this project is that it will create harmony […] By putting different members of the community face to face with people from all walks of life they have never encountered and listening to their stories, hopefully they will come away from the experience with the realisation that beneath our

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[5] The City of Lismore is a local government area in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, Australia. It is considered as the commercial centre for the region. At the 2011 census it had a population of 45,000 of which 2.6 percent were Indigenous Australians (1422). It is a comparatively young population with a median age of 37.

differences we are very much the same (The Northern Rivers Echo 2006c).

This illustrates the enduring nature of the original objectives of the group of young Danish friends who developed Living Library. It also highlights the influence that particular settings and environments have regarding Human Libraries. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the context that Living Library encountered in Lismore.

The Lismore Context

Unlike the creators of Living Library, Baltruweit does not point to any particular incidents of prejudice that prompted her to bring Living Library to Lismore. However, she nominates several motivating factors: a personal interest in encouraging respect for difference, her experience of prejudice in WWII Germany and the post 9/11 era which resulted in some parts of Australian society demonising Muslims. Lismore, however, does not present as an overtly prejudiced community when Living Library arrived at the end of 2006. This is demonstrated via an examination of Lismore's two newspapers for articles dealing with issues related to prejudice. Three topics emerge that demonstrate Lismore's largely positive attitude regarding issues related to prejudice: public displays of respect for difference; activism for minority sexuality rights; and community support for refugees.

News articles depict Lismore as a community that respects difference. In post 9/11 Australia attitudes towards Muslims surfaced that depicted them as exclusivist, hostile to intermingling and unable to exist within secular society (The Northern Rivers Echo 2006f).[6] Lismore, however, demonstrates an inclusivist attitude. For example, one of Lismore's newspapers, *The Northern Rivers Echo,* responded to this national climate of prejudice by criticising the Prime Minister, John Howard, for failing to address expressions of bigotry aimed at Muslims. In addition to this, Southern Cross University hosted a public lecture, Passion for Peace, in which representatives from the three major world religions spoke with the aim of "demonstrating that people from different faiths can choose to live in harmony" (The Northern Rivers Echo 2006d). Further evidence that respect for difference is part of Lismore's social fabric is found in activist efforts in Lismore.

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[6] The assertions made in this news article regarding attitudes towards Muslims expressed by media figures and politicians are given scholarly attention in two journal articles published around the time of Lismore Living Library. One examines the construction of racism in parliamentary debates about asylum seekers (Every and Augoustinos 2007) and the other examines how asylum seekers are categorised in the media (O'Doherty and Lecouteur 2007).

Lismore is home to an established movement of activism for sexual and gender minority equality, demonstrated in three articles on gay rights and marriage equality rallies held in Lismore (The Northern Rivers Echo 2006e; Scollay 2007; The Northern Star 2007). The rallies were held as part of the national day of action to protest against the Australian Government's 2004 ban on same-sex marriage. *The Northern Rivers Echo* (2006e) reported the activists' message to their community:

> We are saying that our relationships are as valid as anyone else's and we are being discriminated against. Formal relationship recognition is essential to achieve social equality and legal security for loving same sex couples and their families. It's time for legal discrimination to end and for same sex couples to be treated with full equality.

The Northern Star (2007) reported a strong turn-out at the rally which local organisers regarded as demonstrating "the growing community support for the full equality of sexual gender minorities." Support is also found in Lismore for its growing population of Sudanese refugees.

News articles published from 2005 to 2007 relate how Lismore responded to the arrival of Sudanese refugees at that time. The arrival of the refugees was facilitated by Sanctuary Northern Rivers (SNR) which has assisted over 150 African refugees to settle in Lismore and Mullumbimby (Sanctuary Northern Rivers 2014). The president of SNR, Michael Douglas, explains that "[t]here was a perception in Australia that refugees were seeking to come to our shores unjustly or unfairly" (Peake 2007). Lismore's newspapers demonstrate that a more positive attitude already existed in Lismore and report Sudanese refugees describing Lismore residents as helpful and that they now feel part of the community (Turnball 2005; The Northern Rivers Echo 2006a). While, generally speaking, Lismore welcomed Sudanese refugees as a community, incidents of discrimination did occur. For example, one Sudanese woman explains that "it is hard to get a nice house because of prejudice against Sudanese" (Parks 2007). However, an article in *The Northern Star* (Gardner 2006a) demonstrates that, while individual examples of prejudice existed, Lismore's general reaction to the Sudanese refugees was positive. The article reports that Tamworth, another city in regional New South Wales, rejected a Federal Government offer to be involved in a one-year trial resettlement program of five Sudanese families whereas

"Lismore opens its arms to these refugees" (Gardner 2006a). It is within this positive climate that Lismore Living Library commenced.

Lismore Living Library

The first Living Library event in Australia took place on 3 November 2006 at the Lismore City Library. The launch was the culmination of months of preparation and planning which began in March 2006. Approximately 120 people attended the launch and provided a diverse range of community members as potential Readers. Guests included school students, general community members, and high profile community figures such as Councillors, the Police Superintendent, Regional Directors of Government Departments, the Vice-Chancellor of Southern Cross University and editors of local newspapers (McIntyre and Garbutt 2007). Over 30 Living Books were available with titles representing a wide range of topics: multi-faith communities (Buddhist, Islamic, Christian, Jewish), people with disabilities (intellectual, physical, mental health, visual impairment), the multicultural community (Italian, German, Sudanese refugees, Filipino), Aboriginal people (Bundjalung, community members, young people), older people, young people, gay men and lesbians, a farmer, an environmentalist, police officers, and a man living with HIV/AIDS (McIntyre and Garbutt 2007). By the end of the evening 80 readings had taken place.

The list of Living Books indicates the wide range of groups on offer and the types of prejudices and stereotypes that were open to engagement. Some Living Books expressed their reasons for volunteering, including Alex Hunter who volunteered as a Living Book as a fourth generation farmer from Corndale. He shares his reason for doing so during an interview with *The Northern Rivers Echo*, "[c]reed or colour doesn't matter. We're all human beings. We all have feelings. Everybody wants to live a happy life. It's very important that we understand other people's points of view. That's what it's all about" (The Northern Rivers Echo 2006b). Hadia Goldhawk of Mullumbimby volunteered as a Living Book as an Australian woman who converted to Islam. She shares her experience in an interview with *The Northern Star*:

> I'm not going to solve the problems of the world. I'm doing this so people can
> better understand what Muslims do and how we worship God. There are a lot of
> misconceptions, most through ignorance, so if you talk to a Muslim face-to-face
> it might offer a bit more understanding (Gardner 2006b).

A few months after the launch, an article appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and presented the view of Shauna McIntyre, the Lismore City Council community development officer, on the Living Library method:

> While it's a positive initiative, it's also sobering. We are reminded that due to ignorance, media and circumstances, some people in the community hold attitudes about others that are incorrect. It's a reminder of how precious and vulnerable these relationships are and how they are so easily undone and attacked (Scobie 2007).

These three reflections illustrate the desire held by Lismore Living Library volunteers to help people see the humanity of other people, to value different points of view, to respect difference as part of being human and to seek knowledge and understanding and move beyond ignorance.

While it was only ever envisaged that Lismore Living Library would operate beyond this launch as part of special events, the impact of the launch was such that it attracted enough demand to offer another Living Library the following month. The decision was then made to run Lismore Living Library on the first Friday of each month between 11.00am and 2.00pm to allow for a lunchtime readership (Kinsley 2009; Wakejima 2009). In March 2007 the Lismore City Library took responsibility for its organisation and management.

The launch attracted a strong media response. Articles appeared in *The Northern Rivers Echo*, *The Northern Star* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* and interviews were broadcast on ABC Radio. This attention enabled Lismore to share the Living Library method beyond its own community. McIntyre succinctly expresses why the library was having such a powerful affect in Lismore:

> Against a global background of fear and division, here in Lismore people from very different backgrounds were willing to take risks and come together and talk, listen and learn. I think that's what was extraordinary, and what really touched people's hearts […] We're creating social cohesion. By bringing people together in a safe environment we're breaking down barriers. We hope people will realise we've actually got more in common than our differences (The Northern Rivers Echo 2006b).

News of the success, and of Living Library's potential, spread and in a short time over 50 expressions of interest arrived from groups all over Australia enquiring about running their own Living Libraries (McIntyre and Garbutt 2007). Living Library soon spread across Australia, establishing a variety of events, programs and a network of support (Pearse 2009; Human Libraries Australia 2010a).

In 2007, Lismore City Council and Lismore Library successfully applied for a grant to the federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) through the Diverse Australia Program. The funding enabled the development of the National Living Library Strategy: Living Libraries Australia. Australia is the first country to fund a national strategy for Living Library (Rendall 2009). The grant funded, from 2007 to 2010, the development of a website, resource kits, videos and employment of a project officer. Each of these resources was aimed at establishing a foundation for ensuring the sustainability of Human Library Australia (see Human Libraries Australia 2010b). In October 2010 Living Libraries Australia began operating under the name Human Libraries Australia in response to a name change by the international organisation when it was accused of breaching copyright by a US-based company (Sword 2011).

This is the story of the creation, development and expansion of Human Library from Copenhagen to Lismore. It is a story born out of people's faith and conviction in the common sense belief that prejudice is destabilised and countered when people who are different meet and engage in dialogue about difference. The following discusses perceptions of Human Library formed by people who were involved with it during these early years.

Participant Perceptions: The Early Living Libraries in Europe and Australia

Participant feedback and evaluation associated with early Living Libraries in Europe and Australia is provided by The Living Library Organiser's Guide (Abergel et al. 2005) and An Evaluation Report on the National Living Library Implementation Strategy (Rendall 2009). These documents provide information about the early years of Living Library as well as participants' perceptions, and suggest that Human Library is adaptable, challenges knowledge, raises self-awareness, and encourages attitudinal change.

Adaptable

As we have seen, Human Library's ability to adapt to new settings has been demonstrated by its use at different venues in different countries. Its adaptability extends beyond this physical reality and indicates its use with different groups of people such as school children and local communities. Two examples demonstrate this.

The Living Library at Alvaern Youth School in Nesodden, Norway, in October 2003, was organised as an educational experiment. Its Organiser, Trygve Augestad, aimed "to give the students new knowledge about people and groups that they have little or no regular contact with, and to bring issues of stereotypes and prejudices to their attention" (Abergel et al. 2005, 18). The adaptability of Living Library, made evident in this example within the school setting, is also demonstrated by the way local communities adapt Living Libraries to their particular contexts. One such example is found in a local library in the inner Sydney suburb of Leichhardt, Australia. This local library organised its own Living Library to challenge library patrons' notions of what defines 'normal':

> [M]any readers approached the event "tentatively and curiously", some with misconceptions about refugees and their lives […] Readers were generally surprised by "how fluently and easily" the refugees (books) were able to speak about their experiences and were often "shocked" by the circumstances which led them to seek refuge in Australia […] this exchange offered local residents a rare opportunity to have an open dialogue with refugees (Rendall 2009, 20).

These examples demonstrate Living Library's adaptability to new settings and new groups to respond to a variety of contexts and the way that false knowledge contributes to prejudice. This adaptability, however, is not without its problems.

Peter Wootsch was an Organiser with Living Library from 2001 to 2004 at the Sziget Festival in Budapest, Hungary, referred to earlier, that celebrates the diversity of humanity. Further illustrating Living Library's adaptability, Wootsch remarks that by 2003 Living Library's involvement at the Sziget Festival had allowed it to "reform its educational approach, the setting and the methodology" (Abergel et al. 2005, 22). While adaptability is a positive quality it also alerted Wootsch to the dangers inherent in adapting Human Library to new settings and groups:

In 2003 and 2004 several initiatives set the Living Library elsewhere – in schools, real libraries and as part of student events. We had good and bad experiences with such adaptions […] If the motivation, however, was not clear or merely involved self-promotion for the Organisers, then as a result the adapted Libraries missed the point completely […] it should be underlined that the Living Library is best set in a protective and safe environment. It should not be abused for political propaganda, egocentric public relations or for commercial purposes (Abergel et al. 2005, 22).

Wootsch's observation raises a point of concern for Human Library and this research project. It is clear that Living Library can be adapted to a variety of settings and groups but adaptability should not come with the price of silencing Human Library's anti-prejudice objectives. This matter is further discussed in the review of literature associated with research about Human Library. For now, it is enough to note that the examples of Alvaern Youth School and Leichhardt Library demonstrate the adaptability of Human Library. This adaptability extends Human Library's ability to challenge false knowledge and how it is produced.

Challenges Knowledge

Adapting Living Library for use at Alvaern Youth School assisted its students to challenge knowledge about different groups within society. This is illustrated by their teacher's interpretation of his students' feedback:

The stereotype about asylum seekers being lazy, criminal and not integrated into Norwegian society was seriously challenged when the former Pakistani national marathon champion and military deserter began to share his experiences as a 'foreigner' in Norway. A prejudice of the mentally ill as large, brutal and dangerous men was challenged by a young woman who had faced great ordeals in her life and was very open and honest in sharing her experiences (Abergel et al. 2005, 20).

Augestad's educational experiment not only demonstrates how Living Libraries can adapt to new groups of people but that they challenge existing knowledge and misconceptions and ways knowledge is produced by confronting popular conventions that teach people that you dare not ask certain questions. This is also demonstrated when the library patrons at Leichhardt Library engaged in open dialogue with refugees and confronted misconceptions

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that they held about refugees. In examples such as these, knowledge is challenged and there is also a raising of self-awareness.

Raises Self-awareness

People associated with Living Library during its early years relate their experiences of raising self-awareness. A woman who volunteered as a Feminist Human Book in the years when Human Library spread across Europe, offers her reflections on the way Living Library invites Readers and Human Books to reconsider prejudice and stereotypes. She explains how volunteering as a Human Book raised her self-awareness:

> The hours spent with my readers meant self-awareness, and it was a challenge to meet curious, open-minded and critical young people who had very specific questions and wanted to get answers […] all this means constant learning about each other [...] Some people aren't given a chance from the beginning, and it's about the fight against this, and about reflecting on it […] Several readers asked me if I'm a real feminist and different things resonated in this question: worry, shyness, uncertainty, curiosity, interest and criticism. And whenever I was asked this question I always asked back: 'what does a feminist mean to you?' (Abergel et al. 2005, 44-45)

Reflecting on her Readers' questions enabled this woman to raise her self-awareness, particularly about what it means to be a feminist. She also engages her Readers in a process of reflection when she asks them to explain what they think it means to be a feminist. It allowed her the opportunity to confront and encourage people to change their attitudes about feminism.

Encourages Attitudinal Change

Each of the examples above indicates specific encounters with attitudinal change. This is a topic that emerges from Karyn Rendall's (2009)[7] evaluation of the National Living Library

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[7] The report's data was gathered throughout 2008 from existing Living Libraries across Australia. The data comprises six sources: 1) Eight evaluation reports by Living Library Organisers based on an example provided to them by Lismore Living Library (McIntyre and Garbutt 2007); 2) 21 self-administered surveys using closed and open questions; 3) feedback sheets, used in preparing local evaluation reports that gathered data relating to attitudinal effects; 4) telephone interviews by the report's author aimed at gaining further details regarding specific Living Library events; 5) a report by local Diploma of Welfare students undertaking a qualitative study of Living Library and community cohesion; 6) eighteen self-administered surveys by Living Library Organisers using open and closed

Implementation Strategy by Living Libraries Australia as part of the funding agreement with DIAC. Rendall (2009, iii) states that that "[t]here is little doubt that those who participate believe the experience has contributed to greater understanding and a breaking down of stereotypes." She concludes that Living Libraries break down barriers, build community cohesion and change attitudes between people from different backgrounds. Rendall offers the following points, developed using participant feedback, to illustrate the changes that result from Living Libraries:

- Approximately 95% of books suggested they would return to future events and readers found attendance at the events stimulating and enlightening.

- 95% of books believed the Living Library effectively addressed stereotypes.

- 75% of books expressed a greater sense of belonging to the wider community.

- 95% of readers believed Living Library increased understanding of others.

- 65% of readers recognised changes in their perceptions or viewpoints (Rendall 2009, 18).

These statistics indicate that the majority of surveyed participants formed a positive opinion of Living Library and the perception that the experience contributes to increased understanding of others and changes in attitudes. In light of these statistics, Rendall (2009, 18) states, "[w]hile it is difficult to accurately determine evidence of attitudinal change amongst participants of Living Libraries or perceived benefits to the community, quotes from living books and readers, plus observations by Organisers, allows some scope for analysis."

Readers' survey comments relate experiences of moving from "ignorance to understanding," learning that people are "different, yet the same" and of celebrating "diversity." Such remarks resonate with the view that Human Library is "[a] substantial tool for changing prejudices and attitudes for the better" (Rendall 2009, 19). Comments by Human Books emphasise feeling "more connected with my wider community," feeling "empathy and understanding" and a growth in confidence and self-worth. These comments match the sentiment of one somewhat humorous response by a Human Book that reveals how Human

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questions aimed at gaining evidence regarding attitudinal changes and suggested improvements for future events (Rendall 2009).

Library exposes the effects of challenging prejudice: "some people come with preconceived ideas and [are] surprised at how 'normal' we are" (Rendall 2009, 19).

However, feedback provided by Human Library Organisers illustrates conflicting and uncertain views regarding the conclusions they draw from participants' comments. Rendall argues that this makes it difficult to accurately determine evidence of attitudinal change in participants. She illustrates this confusion using the following statements by Organisers:

> A lot of people say that unless you actually try the program you cannot imagine the scope of its personal application.

> Living Books reported that they felt as if they'd corrected many of the misconceptions readers had about them and their lifestyle/culture etc.

> We have no evidence, only that reader's attitudes change, but many did state that it opened up their minds to understanding other people's lives and what life might have been like for our books (Rendall 2009, 22).

These comments, particularly the ambiguity expressed in the final comment, illustrate that, while Organisers believe that Human Libraries bring about attitudinal change in their participants, they struggle to produce evidence that portrays this. This shines a light on knowledge gaps regarding people's personal experiences of Human Libraries, which invites research that examines this in greater depth. Specifically, it invites research that interrogates Human Books' feelings that they corrected Readers' misconceptions and that the experience "opened up their minds". This research responds to this gap.

Conclusion

Human Library brings people together to talk about difference as a means of engaging them in one-on-one dialogue about prejudice and stereotypes. It does so in pursuit of its strategy to increase respect for difference and human rights (Human Library 2012c). It commenced in Denmark as a strategy for diminishing violence between festivalgoers resulting from lack of respect for difference. The Council of Europe's Human Rights Education Youth Programme recognised Human Library's method as a useful way of introducing young people to human rights that should be protected and fostered by everyone and advanced as necessary for the personal well-being of all (Abergel et al. 2005). This recognition helped promote the spread of Human Library across Europe and to Australia.

People involved with early Living Libraries share their perceptions that Human Library is adaptable, challenges knowledge, raises self-awareness, and encourages attitudinal change. However, it is acknowledged that these outcomes are difficult to evaluate. These four perceptions provide cues for this research project and add to the findings of the research literature on Human Library that will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Learning from the Research Literature: What we know about Human Libraries, prejudice research and anti-prejudice strategies.

This chapter discusses the research literature that is useful for appreciating the work of Human Library as a means of countering prejudice. It is divided into four sections. Firstly, it discusses the manifestations of prejudice that are most pertinent to the Human Library participants in this research project: ableism, homophobia and racism. It also acknowledges the intersectionality of prejudice. Secondly, it discusses the existing research literature on Human Library and considers its relation to intergroup contact theory and its critiques. This discussion explains that contact theory is not used as an organising framework research but that a number of elements within contact theory are useful for analysing and discussing participants' perceptions of their involvement in Human Libraries. Thirdly, it discusses several concepts that are offered within the existing Human Library research literature and explains how they interact with, and are supported by, the chosen contact theory elements.

Categories of Prejudice

The research literature on anti-prejudice strategies is dominated by anti-racism strategies. Human Library, however, counters all prejudices and does not limit itself to racism. Several manifestations of prejudice are most evident in the experiences of the Human Books who participate in this research project. The following, therefore, briefly explains what is meant by ableism, homophobia and racism. In doing this it is also useful to bear in mind the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw et al. 1995).

Intersectionality was originally developed to describe the way that race interconnects with, and depends upon, other categories (Valentine 2007). Intersectionality rejects the notion of race, gender, ethnicity, class, and so forth as separate essentialist categories. It acknowledges that prejudice is not contained within the confines of such categories and that it is experienced across multiple categories simultaneously (Bowleg 2012; McCall 2005). For example, some people experience prejudice that is directed at their socio-economic status and sexual identity (Porter, Russell, and Sullivan 2003). Some women demonstrate the meaning of intersectionality when they refuse to divide their identities into neat categories of race, sexual identity and gender because they encounter prejudice within each of these

identities (Maddison and Scalmer 2006). Similarly, other people encounter prejudice within the interconnections of impairment, race and sexual identity (Smith, Foley, and Chaney 2008; Bowleg 2008). Approaching prejudice by remaining alert to its intersectional nature allows for a broader consideration of what anti-racism strategies offer other anti-prejudice efforts. The following adds to the brief explanations provided in Chapter 1 and discusses scholarship pertaining to ableism, homophobia, and racism, which are at the centre of this research project and how its participants' respond to the everyday experience of prejudice and how it diminishes the enjoyment of their rights and freedoms.

Ableism

Ableism signifies the prejudice that is encountered by people who live with physical and/or mental impairment and is shaped by the belief that impairment renders a person incapable of functioning as a full member of society (Smith, Foley, and Chaney 2008; Loja et al. 2013; Harpur 2009; Hehir 2002). The disabled people's movement in Britain demonstrates how people encounter prejudice in their everyday lives via language. The movement uses 'impairment' to refer to functional limitations of bodies and minds and 'disability' to refer to the disabling barriers of unequal access and negative attitudes (Morris 2001; Worth 2008). Language is an integral part of how disabled people experience the denial of human rights and how they struggle to attain their rights (Loja et al. 2013). Morris (2001, 3) illustrates the impact of language differentiation:

> This is why we don't use the term disability to mean impairment. Instead we use it to refer to prejudice and discrimination, just as racism and sexism refer to the prejudice and discrimination experienced by Black people and by women. A disabled person might say, therefore […] "My impairment is the fact that I can't speak; my disability is the fact that you won't take the time and trouble to learn how to communicate with me."

People in Australia struggle against prejudice attached to impairment. While the way the country deals with impairment has changed, for example in the late 1980s Australia engaged in efforts to deinstitutionalise disability, structural responses to impairment can continue to ignore the link between impairment and prejudice (Butteriss 2012).

Negative attitudes toward people with impairments, including people living with mental illness, continue to have a disabling impact on people in their everyday lives. People

experience this discrimination when making the transition from school to the workforce (Winn and Hay 2009), via attitudes experienced in the context of hospitality and tourism (Daruwalla and Darcy 2005) and as students with learning disabilities at Australian universities (Ryan 2007). This highlights the need for action that counters prejudice and encourages the development of societies in which people who live with physical and mental impairments are able to enjoy their rights and freedoms on a day-to-day basis. Moreover, Morris (2001, 6) argues that such efforts need to be driven by disabled people because as "long as non-disabled people retain the power to represent our reality, impairment will always mean at best a cause for treatment and cure, at worst a life not worth living." This assertion highlights the challenge of how to include people who are the target of prejudice within appropriate strategies for countering prejudice, including people with physical and mental impairments.

Homophobia

Discriminatory actions derived from homophobic beliefs, such as the attitude that homosexuality is unnatural, sick or dangerous, are unlawful in Australia and many other Western countries but they continue to occur as everyday encounters with harassment and hostility and they impede people's enjoyment of their rights and freedoms (Flood and Hamilton 2005; Irwin 2007; Willis 2012). Some religious and cultural communities within Australia continue to discriminate against non-heterosexual forms of sexuality (Louis, Barlow, and Greenaway 2012). Heterosexism reaches beyond these spheres and is present in the wider community, occurring as bullying in places of work and study and the refusal of appropriate health and aged care services and can lead to harassment and violence (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014; Irwin 2007; Porter, Russell, and Sullivan 2003). The impact of heterosexism on people's day-to-day lives manifests itself in numerous ways. For example, lack of belonging results in higher rates of depression in gay men (McLaren, Jade, and McLachlan 2008) and same-sex attracted young people experience higher rates of poor mental health than young heterosexual people (Willis 2012; Lea, de Wit, and Reynolds 2014). Attitudes towards same-sex parents and their children need to change before Australian communities will begin to fully accept these families (Morse, McLaren, and McLachlan 2007). Addressing these impediments to people's rights and freedoms requires strategies that enable people who identify as LGBTIQ to counter prejudice that is a consequence of homophobia and heterosexism.

Racism

Australia's history of settlement and immigration has established it as one of the world's most culturally diverse societies. Australians respond to their multicultural environment with mixed attitudes (Dandy and Pe-Pua 2013). This ongoing struggle with the interaction between racial and ethnic minorities and majorities is demonstrated in the "micro-ecology of intergroup contact within public spaces" (Priest et al. 2014, 33). It has been examined in the cross-perspectives of three groups – Anglo-Australians, Indigenous Australians, and immigrant/refugee background Australians – and their intergroup relations regarding the acculturation expectations each group has of the other groups (Dandy and Pe-Pua 2013). This research found a lack of interethnic interaction between Anglo-Australians, Indigenous Australians, and immigrant/refugee background Australians. Interethnic interaction "appears significantly less common for Anglo-Australians" and "opportunities for authentic sustained contact were rare or rarely taken up" (Dandy and Pe-Pua 2013, 239). Research such as this demonstrates the need to "include Anglo-Australians and British immigrants in "diversity" activities and strategies, from which they have felt excluded" (Dandy and Pe-Pua 2013, 239). This highlights the basic challenge of simply getting group members, who would not normally meet, to make contact. This lack of interethnic interactions also points to the presence of prejudice related to race and ethnicity within multicultural Australia.

Racism exists within Australia's contested and changing racial context and diminishes people's enjoyment of their rights and freedoms. Most Australians acknowledge that racism is a problem within Australian society (Dunn and Nelson 2011) and express the belief that racism is a normal and shared social activity among White Australians (Ngarritjan Kessaris 2006). Discrimination against Aboriginal Australians is prevalent throughout the community and Aboriginal Australians experience racial abuse on a daily basis in public spaces (Mellor 2003; Mitchell, Every, and Ranzijn 2011; Hollinsworth 2014; Paradies and Cunningham 2009). False knowledge and misconceptions contribute to day-to-day racism directed against them by non-Aboriginal people applying false beliefs such as Aboriginal Australians receive higher welfare payments and are more likely to drink alcohol than non-Aboriginal Australians (Pedersen et al. 2006). Racist views such as these are also directed at asylum seekers (Pedersen et al. 2005).

Australian attitudes towards refugees indicate a spectrum of opinions and attitudes. However, opinions within the broader Australian community are generally polarised, expressing strongly positive attitudes towards refugees or strongly negative attitudes (Schweitzer et al. 2005). Such attitudes demonstrate how refugees in Australia encounter racism when language is used to label them in ways that diminishes their humanity. This results in refugees feeling both obvious and subtle forms of exclusion and they are left wondering at what point they will be an Australian rather than a refugee (Fozdar and Hartley 2013, 45).

This discussion of ableism, homophobia and racism not only describes these categories of prejudice and how they manifest themselves in people's day-to-day lives, it also highlights the challenges that confronting such prejudice entails. In particular, it illuminates the challenges in developing anti-prejudice strategies that include victims of prejudice as well as the perpetrators of prejudice and it demonstrates the difficulty of inviting people into such strategies who would not normally meet with people outside of their own group. Human Library offers a strategy that aims to address these challenges.

What does the research literature say about Human Libraries?

The existing research literature on Human Library includes articles by Lucy Kinsley (2009) and Amy Ashmore (2010) who study Human Library from the perspective of librarians. The other research is completed by academics, Garbutt (2008), Kudo, et al. (2011) and Dreher and Mowbray (2012). Critiquing the diversity of approaches adopted by these studies informs the methodological choices made throughout this research project. This literature comprises the entire body of existing published research into Human Library. It presents themes that have been identified by studies of Human Libraries, as well as those noted by Rendall (2009), and it indicates gaps in knowledge that require further examination. Three major themes are evident in the literature: adaptability, spaces and attitudinal change. As will be made evident in the discussion, these themes include concepts that relate to a number of elements within contact theory. Therefore, prior to commencing the discussion of the three major themes, it is necessary to discuss the connections that are often made between the Human Library strategy and contact theory as well as criticisms of contact theory. This will explain why contact theory is not used in this research as an overarching framework, or a

lens through which to examine it, and will indicate which of its elements are selected as useful for better appreciating the themes offered by the Human Library research literature.

Human Library and Contact Theory

Human Library is often aligned with contact theory because it is judged as exhibiting elements that resonate with it (Garbutt 2008; Kudo et al. 2011; Dreher and Mowbray 2012). This is evident when it is described as a "common-sense rendering [of] the idea that personal contact counters the rush to judgement based on stereotypes" (Garbutt 2008, 272) and that it expresses "seemingly common sense values […] that contact between groups and individuals will reduce prejudice and stereotyping" (Dreher and Mowbray 2012, 3). The common sense conviction to which these statements refer is that contact, such as that encountered at Human Libraries, can help alleviate hostile or negative attitudes that are held towards people and groups because they are different.

While there are recognisable similarities shared by the Human Library strategy and contact theory, difficulties exist in using contact theory as a lens through which to examine Human Libraries. This is made evident by the different views toward contact theory expressed in the research literature on Human Libraries (Garbutt 2008; Kudo et al. 2011; Dreher and Mowbray 2012). They provide a subtle demonstration of the split in opinion that has existed regarding contact theory since it was first posited. One extreme argues that group contact only causes conflict while the opposing position argues that intergroup interaction is an essential element for reducing prejudice (Pettigrew et al. 2011; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). While the existing Human Library studies sit at various points between these extreme views, they share a reticence to embrace contact theory as a framework for examining Human Libraries.

Two of the studies do not discuss this in detail but they briefly state that they do not include contact theory in their research about Human Library. Garbutt (2008) explains that his choice is a consequence of Valentine's (2008) excellent discussion of the limitations of contact theory. Kudo et al. (2011, 4) explain that they do not use contact theory because they believe it would limit their research focus especially given "the rudimentary nature of Human Library research to date." Instead, the team decided to identify general themes and to

provide theoretical reflections that can be used by other Human Library practitioners. I adopt a similar approach and my reasons for doing so are explained as part of the discussion below. Unlike these two studies, Dreher and Mowbray (2012) explain their decision not to use contact theory by engaging in a critical examination of scholarship which recommends caution for those attempting to use intergroup contact strategies to address prejudice, in general, and racism, in particular. The choices made by these three studies not only demonstrate the reticence of researchers to use contact theory to examine Human Libraries, they also highlight the contentious and problematic nature of contact theory. The following briefly introduces contact theory, discusses its ongoing critique and explains that, while it is not adopted by this research as its framework, it provides a number of elements that resonate with the themes that are advanced in the research literature about Human Libraries and are, therefore, useful for discussing what these themes mean.

Contact Theory

Contact theory was introduced by Allport (1954/1979) in *The Nature of Prejudice* and still remains a source of critical reflection and lively debate (Dovidio, Glick, and Rudman 2005; Eagly and Diekman 2005; Pettigrew and Tropp 2005; Kenworthy et al. 2005; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Pettigrew et al. 2011; Pettigrew 1998). In contact theory, Allport hypothesised that prejudice "may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals" (Allport 1954/1979, 281). In addition to this, he asserted that four key conditions, also referred to as positive factors, are required if contact between individuals is to achieve its aim of prejudice reduction: equal status contact between majority and minority groups; the pursuit of common goals; intergroup cooperation in the attainment of common goals; and sanction or support by authorities such as law, custom or local atmosphere (Allport 1954/1979). Since Allport first advanced his hypothesis, much critical examination and discussion has been directed at it which has resulted in a more robust appreciation of how it functions and of its capacity to reduce prejudice.

The ongoing study and development of contact theory has been significantly motivated by a desire to respond to a number of perceived weaknesses, two of which have been fundamentally influential (Pettigrew 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Pettigrew et al. 2011). Firstly, it has been argued that in addition to the four key conditions, four interrelated processes function throughout contact to mediate attitude change: learning about outgroups;

changing behaviour; generating affective ties; and ingroup reappraisal. These processes, which may overlap and interact in complex ways, require long-term close relationships rather than initial acquaintanceship which may produce outcomes at different stages over time (Pettigrew 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). Secondly, a number of potential problems were identified concerning Allport's original hypothesis and conditions (1998):

- Rather than contact reducing prejudice it may simply result in prejudiced persons avoiding out-group members.

- It risks being an open-ended list of conditions to which new situational factors are added to attain optimal contact. Such a list excludes most intergroup situations.

- The theory does not explain how or why change happens.

- It is not possible to generalise individual change effects.

These additions and concerns demonstrate the contentious journey that contact theory has taken since it was first introduced (Brambilla, Hewstone, and Colucci 2013; Dovidio, Gaertner, and Kawakami 2003; Pettigrew and Tropp 2005). These contentions have produced a vast body of research into intergroup contact which has resulted in greater knowledge about Allport's original hypothesis and what intergroup contact achieves. Before engaging in a discussion of that literature, it is useful to consider the reasons why scholars have not adopted contact theory in their research about Human Libraries.

Contact Theory and Research Reticence

While scholars make connections between the Human Library strategy and contact theory they exhibit little enthusiasm for acting on this and employing contact theory as a framework for examining Human Libraries in their studies (Garbutt 2008; Kudo et al. 2011; Dreher and Mowbray 2012). For example, they express the belief that contact theory's four key conditions offer a means of organising and evaluating outcomes of Human Libraries (Garbutt 2008; Kudo et al. 2011). Garbutt (2008) offers the following as evidence in support of this assertion: participant status is reversed as Human Books are considered as holding expertise and knowledge given their recognised position within the Human Library; the Human Library dynamic of readings as conversations means that participants share status and responsibility for the pursuit of their goal, which is to move toward the perception of common humanity; and the example of Lismore Human Library's connections with Lismore City Library and Lismore City Council, as well as the support of a local Member of

Parliament as patron, provides the Living Library with mainstream sanction. Although connections such as these are made, to date, no research about Human Libraries has adopted these four conditions to organise and examine its evidence.

The value of adopting the four key conditions as a useful theoretical framework for organising and evaluating evidence about outcomes of Human Libraries needs to bear in mind that research has found that the four conditions are facilitating rather than essential conditions (Pettigrew 1998). That is, while the four conditions encourage the reduction of prejudice, prejudice may still be reduced if they are not present. Given that outcome, the four conditions are now considered as elements within contact theory that require further investigation (Pettigrew and Tropp 2005; Pettigrew 2008; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Pettigrew et al. 2011). This research, however, does not engage them as a means of organising and evaluating outcomes at Human Libraries. This is largely due to the fact that present knowledge about Human Libraries is at a stage where we are seeking to determine the outcomes of Human Libraries before we undertake an in-depth examination of what it is that contributes to their facilitation.

A more critical explanation of the reticence to include contact theory in research about Human Libraries is made by Dreher and Mowbray (2012). They do so as part of their study of the development of Human Libraries Australia, giving particular attention to two well-established Living Libraries, Lismore and Auburn, through the framework of communicative contact. As part of their study, they discuss the extent to which Human Libraries work to combat prejudice and how the criticism of contact theory might apply to Human Libraries. Their study, therefore, alerts us to the need to remain mindful of how the criticisms of contact theory relate to research into Human Libraries. Three of the criticisms of contact theory require further discussion. Firstly, contact theory is criticised for focusing on attitudinal changes in individuals and ignoring structural and institutional inequalities. Secondly, contact theory is criticised for not generalising beyond individuals and for not producing long-term changes in behaviour. The first criticism will be discussed here and then the remaining criticisms will be discussed in regards to recent research and contact theory.

Critics of contact theory accuse it of focusing on attitudinal change in individuals rather than structural inequalities and institutional racism (Hill and Augoustinos 2001; Srivastava and Francis 2006; Hodson 2011; Dovidio, Gaertner, and Saguy 2009). Such criticism asserts that focusing on the individual and the interpersonal diverts attention and energy from the challenge of organisational change (Srivastava and Francis 2006) and that it ignores the textured nature of intergroup attitudes, situated within the context of power relations, and how they are used to perpetuate social structures that are inequitable, discriminatory and violent (Jackman 2005; Gaertner and Dovidio 2005; Hill and Augoustinos 2001). For example, efforts aimed at achieving antiracist changes in community organisations by changing organisational policy, practice or curriculum can be sidelined when personal and emotional issues dominate during strategies used to encourage individual attitudinal change (Srivastava and Francis 2006). Critics respond to this focus on attitudinal change by arguing that rather than measuring intergroup contact by individual attitudinal change, its effectiveness should be measured by how it produces social action and positive change in social systems (Hill and Augoustinos 2001; Hodson 2011). In addition to this assertion, a variety of other suggestions are offered as ways of eliminating contact theory's weaknesses.

A weakness that is a key concern with intergroup contact is that negative contact appears to outweigh the influence of numerous positive contact encounters (Barlow et al. 2012, 1640; Pettigrew and Tropp 2011; Todd et al. 2011). While this does not negate any of the research that demonstrates the beneficial effects of positive intergroup contact, it does highlight the necessity of structuring strategies that will provide positive encounters with intergroup contact. The following eight suggestions demonstrate ways of improving the effectiveness of contact projects. They further illustrate the complications that research would encounter by employing contact theory as a means of examining Human Libraries.

The suggestions are quite practical in nature and cover diverse terrain. They are: 1) contact alone is not enough (Pederson, Walker, and Wise 2005; Kenworthy et al. 2005; Mak, Brown, and Wadey 2013; Vezzali and Giovannini 2012); 2) sequential events are favoured over one-off events (Rodenborg and Huynh 2006); 3) continuing follow-through should be provided (Case 2007); 4) a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies is required (Pederson and Barlow 2008) and the way that big, historical and structural changes in society shape attitudes must be acknowledged (Pederson, Walker, and Wise 2005; Hodson 2011); 5)

responding to local conditions and needs rather than using uniform strategies (Pederson, Walker, and Wise 2005; Stephan and Stephan 2005; Vezzali and Giovannini 2012); 6) working for organisational change must be a strategy focus (Srivastava and Francis 2006; Dovidio, Gaertner, and Saguy 2009); 7) linking projects to social action (Rodenborg and Huynh 2006) and enacting serious challenges to the social realities that shape structural relations (Hill and Augoustinos 2001; Jackman 2005; Dovidio, Gaertner, and Saguy 2009); 8) antiracism goals and objectives must be clearly defined and a means for measuring success must be developed (Hill and Augoustinos 2001). These suggestions contribute to a sequential approach to anti-racism practices and draw on research that offers alternative strategies that focus on privilege rather than on marginalised identities. Furthermore they work towards systemic and organisational change rather than interpersonal understanding. The aim of such strategies is to link conversations to social action.

In addition to these recommendations, the outcomes of individual and interpersonal interventions aimed at reducing prejudice and racism in Australia demonstrate varying degrees of success (Pederson, Walker, and Wise 2005; Pedersen et al. 2011). While it is not possible to judge with certainty which intervention mechanisms are most successful, the following mechanisms have been part of successful interventions: providing accurate information; involving the audience with respect (allowing participants to use careful analysis to form their own opinions); treating emotions carefully; emphasising both commonality and difference for ingroups and outgroups; remaining alert to context; using cognitive dissonance; proper evaluations; allowing contact with outgroup members; dealing with the three functions of attitudes; longer rather than shorter interventions; and including multiple voices from multiple disciplines (Pedersen et al. 2011). These mechanisms offer anti-prejudice researchers, practitioners and policy makers a means of acting that may help improve relations within communities affected by prejudice.

These criticisms of contact theory, as well as the ongoing addition of conditions and processes, demonstrate the difficulty for any intergroup contact strategy to attain the exhaustive and expanding set of conditions that now function within the field of contact theory (Pettigrew 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp 2005; Kenworthy et al. 2005; Stephan and Stephan 2005). This demonstrates the problems that exist for research that uses contact theory as a means of examining anti-prejudice strategies. However, recent research also

demonstrates that some criticisms that have been levelled at contact theory, such as that it does not generalise beyond individuals and that it fails to produce long-term changes in behaviour, are either wrong or not conclusive and require further examination. Therefore, while contact theory is not adopted by this research as a framework, recent research into contact theory demonstrates that a number of its elements would be useful for understanding what happens at Human Libraries.

Recent Research and Contact Theory

Intergroup contact is not a panacea for improving intergroup relations but it is now clear that early pessimism directed at the hypothesis lacks substantial support (Al Ramiah and Hewstone 2013; Hodson 2011; Hewstone et al. 2014). Research into Allport's hypothesis that intergroup contact reduces prejudice has produced a vast body of literature which attests to the validity of the contact hypothesis as a strategy for reducing prejudice (Pettigrew and Tropp 2011). This has been most convincingly demonstrated by a meta-analytic analysis of 515 studies based on a total of over 250,000 participants that indicates that intergroup contact is an effective tool for reducing prejudice (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). In addition to examining Allport's hypothesis, this body of research has extended his original principles (Pettigrew 1998; Pettigrew 2008; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Pettigrew et al. 2011; Pettigrew et al. 2007; Dovidio, Gaertner, and Kawakami 2003). The following discusses several aspects of intergroup contact that are of relevance to this research about Human Libraries: that intergroup contact does generalise beyond individuals and that mediating mechanisms facilitate intergroup contact.

It was noted above that intergroup contact is criticised because individual attitudinal change does not generalise to outgroups. It is now widely acknowledged that intergroup contact not only reduces prejudice between individuals but it contributes to people holding less prejudice for the entire outgroup (Pettigrew and Tropp 2005; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Pettigrew et al. 2011; Al Ramiah and Hewstone 2013; Hewstone et al. 2014). The expanded interest in intergroup contact also means that its use has moved beyond prejudice associated with race and ethnicity and has proved to be effective across many other target groups that differ in terms of age, sexuality, (dis)ability and mental illness, among others (Pettigrew and Tropp 2005; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Hodson 2011). This means that intergroup strategies, such as Human Library, that employ one-on-one interactions are able to function with the

assurance that intergroup contact has the potential to work in a variety of prejudice contexts and that individual changes in attitude do generalise beyond personal interaction and apply to a variety of outgroups with which individuals identify. This effectiveness is further enhanced because the process of generalisation is known to extend beyond the immediate situation and is applied to other outgroups. This multiplier process is referred to as the secondary transfer effect (Pettigrew 2009). For example, a change in attitude towards immigrants, as a result of contact with a person who is an immigrant, not only generalises to immigrants as a group but it may also contribute to changing attitudes to other groups such as people with disabilities and homosexuals (Vezzali and Giovannini 2012; Al Ramiah and Hewstone 2013; Hewstone 2015). These outcomes not only validate and support those who engage in intergroup contact strategies, they also encourage continued research into intergroup contact, particularly longitudinal studies about long-term behaviour change, impacts on structural and political change and mechanisms for greater effectiveness (Al Ramiah and Hewstone 2013; Hewstone et al. 2014; Hodson 2011; Pettigrew and Tropp 2008; Todd et al. 2011; Stephan and Stephan 2005).

Central to the ongoing study of intergroup contact are questions concerning *when* and *how* intergroup contact is effective (Pettigrew et al. 2011; Pettigrew 1998; Dovidio, Gaertner, and Kawakami 2003; Kenworthy et al. 2005; Gaertner and Dovidio 2005). Allport's (1954/1979) four categories explain when positive contact effects are most likely to occur and Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) have demonstrated that even without these facilitating categories positive effects are still possible. The question of how intergroup contact achieves such positive effects remains a vibrant area of research. The three most studied mediators of positive intergroup contact are increased knowledge, anxiety reduction and increased empathy (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008). Allport's original assertion was that contact produced increased knowledge about outgroups which reduced prejudice. The process of bringing people together to know each other better does mediate positive intergroup effects but this cognitive mediator has a minor affect and requires further research to attain stronger conclusions regarding its mediating ability (Pettigrew 2008). The two affective mediators, reduced anxiety and increased empathy, have been found to be more influential in producing positive intergroup outcomes (Pettigrew et al. 2011; Kenworthy et al. 2005; Al Ramiah and Hewstone 2013).

Positive intergroup contact diminishes feelings of anxiety about interacting with outgroup members. Intergroup anxiety is experienced as feelings of discomfort and fear associated with interacting with an outgroup and diminishing this anxiety decreases prejudice (Stephan and Stephan 1985; Paolini, Harris, and Griffin 2015; Stephan 2014; Swart et al. 2011; Mak, Brown, and Wadey 2013). As with anxiety, reducing other negatives emotions like fear, anger and threat also serve as mediators (Schmid, Ramiah, and Hewstone 2014; Stephan and Stephan 2005). Positive intergroup contact increases empathy for outgroups and encourages people to better appreciate the outgroup's perspective; this is referred to as perspective taking. Empathy is commonly described as the ability to "walk in another person's shoes" and it indicates an ability to share and appreciate another person's feelings. Increasing empathy (Gaertner and Dovidio 2005; Kenworthy et al. 2005; Hodson 2011; Swart et al. 2011), which includes perspective-taking (Todd et al. 2011; Todd, Bodenhausen, and Galinsky 2012; Wang et al. 2014), leads to generalised positive outgroup evaluations and reduced prejudice (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008).

This discussion shines a light on several elements within contact theory that appear useful for better understanding how intergroup contact strategies, like that fashioned by Human Library, contribute to reducing prejudice. In particular, the facilitating mechanisms of increased knowledge, decreased anxiety and increased empathy resonate with a number of existing Human Library research concepts. The following explores the concepts of adaptability, spaces, micropublics and cosmopolitanism, and attitudinal change, and discusses how they relate to the three facilitating mediators of positive contact.

Existing Human Library Research Concepts

Adaptability

Human Libraries are described as "connecting communities" and "engaging communities." For example, in relation to the Lismore Living Library, Ashmore (2010, 5) argues that

> [t]he Lismore program, although in many ways similar to some of the earlier Living Library events on which it is based, does not frame itself specifically in terms of addressing prejudices, but on the closely related theme of forging connections within the community by "breaking down barriers" to communication.

Ashmore favours this use of Human Libraries because it is useful for advancing her interest in creating connections between libraries and their communities. Such an approach favours the development of these connections over the task of confronting prejudice and stereotypes in individuals and their communities. Adapting the Human Library method in this manner recalls earlier comments by Wootsch who warned that Organisers' motivations can change the purpose for which Human Libraries are used.

Ashmore (2010, 2) illustrates how she fits within this group:

> Although the original model of Living Libraries as a means of overcoming prejudices is a significant one, it is also possible to move beyond this model to utilise the Living Library concept in new ways […] Living Libraries can be used to expand library services through encouraging discourse within the community, and have the potential to increase the awareness of library services and promote the role of the library within a wider social context.

This observation highlights the relationship that exists between intergroup contact and real world settings as well as the need for it to respond to contextual diversity (Al Ramiah and Hewstone 2013; Hewstone 2015). It also causes us to ask what can we learn about countering prejudice from Human Libraries that have been adapted? Ashmore offers some direction for examining this question.

One particular adaptation that Ashmore finds attractive is using Human Libraries to provide oral sources of information. Ashmore (2010, 3) regards Human Books as filling this role because they are "acting as a complement to other more traditional library services." Dreher and Mowbray (2012) indicate a similar occurrence when they observe that some Human Libraries focus on sharing information and establish themselves as an Indigenous Human Library or Youth Human Library. A Human Library at Douglas College in New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada, offers another example:

> This program is educationally focused, aimed at showcasing and sharing knowledge and ideas within the Douglas College community, and in this sense has moved quite far away from the original focus of Living Libraries in relation to addressing prejudices (Ashmore 2010, 5).

However, can Human Libraries used as oral sources of information counter prejudice? The following provides an example that is useful for responding to this question.

Human Libraries are sometimes run within communities to target people who share common experiences. For example, a Living Library at the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, provided a Human Book, *Recovering Anorexic*, that was read by a person suffering from an eating disorder. Similarly, some Human Books regard Human Library as a way to advocate and share information about a broad range of issues that are rarely talked about openly such as eating disorders, mental health, physical impairment and sexuality (Dreher and Mowbray 2012). Ashmore (2010, 5) describes such approaches to Human Library as:

> [R]econceptualised or expanded to include a greater diversity of types of programs and services […] allowing for new learning opportunities as well as fostering connections between those with common interests […] the concept of human beings as authoritative and unique sources of information.

These are examples of sources of information focused on specific themes that still aim to engage participants in countering prejudice and stereotypes and, therefore, advance Human Library's anti-prejudice objective. Studying how Human Libraries engage people as sources of information is useful for examining how increasing knowledge about difference acts as a cognitive mediator to counter prejudice (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008). This is assisted by considering how knowledge production occurs as part of a dynamic process whereby practical wisdom (McLaren 2002; Maddison and Scalmer 2006) is used to construct authentic knowledge that originates in day-to-day human activity and results in a better understanding of history, including what it means to live with difference (Darder 2002; Roberts 2000; Blackburn 2000; Freire 1996). Human Books, who act as authoritative sources of information, engage in cognitive mediation and are included among the participants in this research project and their contribution to this study will be examined in Chapter 10. Human Libraries not only adapt in the ways they share information and knowledge about difference, they also adapt across a variety of locations.

Spaces

While Human Libraries can function in a variety of settings, this does not mean that the locations in which Human Libraries are set are of little significance. Ashmore (2010, 3) illustrates this:

> [T]he concept of explicitly addressing prejudice is not without problems, especially when working within a library environment which aims to be inclusive of all users.

Ashmore is sensitive to locating Human Libraries within the library space and believes that Human Libraries, located within real libraries, can exclude people from the library space due to feelings of discomfort. These comments invite discussion about which spaces should be used for Human Libraries if they are to pursue their aim of countering prejudice and stereotypes.

Space, however, is not simply defined by its physical location and attributes; it is also defined by the activity undertaken within its parameters as well as the ideals for which it stands. For example, spaces that are defined as locations for countering prejudice are affected by people's anxiety when asked to confront their prejudice because people avoid intergroup contact that makes them feel vulnerable. As noted above, the reduction of anxiety is a key affective mediator in achieving positive intergroup outcomes (Srivastava and Francis 2006; Pettigrew and Tropp 2008; Al Ramiah and Hewstone 2013). Ashmore (2010, 4) highlights the impact this has on Human Libraries as spaces:

> [W]hen the overt focus of a Living Library event is to overcome prejudice, it is possible that some users will be less willing to participate because they do not want to be seen as prejudiced against any individual they wish to speak to; the statement "What's Your Prejudice?" can be interpreted as accusatory.

This cautionary note should not dissuade us from targeting public spaces as settings for intergroup contact, rather it highlights the need to find appropriate ways to increase the accessibility of such spaces, especially for people from minority backgrounds, as a means of reducing prejudice and promoting respect for diversity (Priest et al. 2014). This raises questions regarding the selection of spaces for Human Libraries and how Human Libraries are shaped and promoted as spaces for countering prejudice that also decrease anxiety attached to meeting members of outgroups (Kenworthy et al. 2005; Al Ramiah and Hewstone 2013). This will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7 and it also benefits from the concepts of micropublics and cosmopolitanism.

Micropublics and Cosmopolitanism

As a result of studying social contact in everyday encounters Ash Amin (2002) proffers the concept of 'micropublics' as a way of creating intergroup interdependence. These refer to

local settings or environments that are sites of everyday social contact and encounter. It is a concept that enables researchers to bring theory and activism into dialogue. It is useful for examining public spaces as settings for contact between minority and majority groups (Priest et al. 2014) that include practices of social exclusion (Noble and Poynting 2010) and how we might develop shared spaces that provide and encourage encounters with strangers even for those who may intentionally avoid such spaces (Dandy and Pe-Pua 2013; Valentine 2008; Hodson 2011; Todd et al. 2011).

The concept of micropublics also offers a valuable contribution to anti-multiculturalism rhetoric which is often presented in the language of majority prejudice and racism versus the language of community harmony. Amin's approach is attractive to both conservatives and progressives who, sharing the goal of living together peacefully, search for a response to the rhetoric of multiculturalism that works in concrete settings. Amin's theory of cultural contact attracts each of these groups because, rather than favouring one particular point of view, it offers possibilities for integrating minorities within the mainstream and for creating destabilising micropublics that challenge dominant thinking. Given its appeal to satisfy these often conflicting groups, micropublics offer a useful strategy for inclusion in research into Human Library (Garbutt 2008). The concept of micropublics as a response to the rhetoric of anti-multiculturalism is also useful for responding to the way that groups shape the societal reality of prejudice.

Group membership influences prejudice because it shapes people's beliefs, emotions and actions (Pedersen et al. 2011; Ata, Bastian, and Lusher 2009). This can occur positively and negatively (Zitek and Hebl 2007). Group membership functions negatively when Australians use the perception that other Australians reject immigrants to justify their own hostile views about immigration. This is demonstrated by group dynamics in which Australians fall into line with Australians who express the view that we should exclude or incarcerate asylum seekers and, as a result, are willing to vote to support harsh treatment (Louis, Barlow, and Greenaway 2012). Conversely, group membership has a positive influence on prejudice when people become more tolerant as a result of identifying with groups that are tolerant. Group members identifying with groups that embody norms of tolerance will become more tolerant by embracing that group's identity (Louis, Barlow, and Greenaway 2012). This demonstrates that ingroup identification is malleable and that prejudice and stereotypes

"need not be inevitable correlates of ingroup allegiance but rather arise from specific intergroup contexts" (Louis, Barlow, and Greenaway 2012, 95). Group membership, which is an example of how micropublics function within societies, can be used to encourage people to resist or change prejudiced attitudes, feelings and actions.

This example of how micropublics function as different social groups within society illustrates the need for everyday spaces of difference and highlights the contemporary societal reality that "living with difference is an unavoidable part of social experience in the twenty-first century" (Ang 2008, 230). The development and study of such spaces is enhanced by Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006) and Ien Ang (2008) who offer useful insights for Human Library as a response to difference. Multiculturalism is often experienced in two ways: as a policy position and as a state of affairs. Appiah (2006) criticises multiculturalism for its imprecise definition and employs the term 'cosmopolitanism' which Ang (2008) uses to develop her concept of 'cosmopolitan multiculturalism.' Ang is drawn to the practical orientation of Appiah's concept which enables participants to agree on the terms of living together in a multicultural society without having to agree on why. The focus is making living together work by acknowledging that people are different and they have much to learn from their differences. This resonates with the cognitive mediator of increased knowledge and Appiah refers to this as developing habits of coexistence.

An essential element in constructing coexistence is conversation, understood as dialogue, also an essential element within the Human Library strategy. The contribution that the conceptualisation of dialogue makes to examining Human Libraries will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5 which discusses Freire's (1996) theory of liberation education and its contribution to this thesis. For now, however, it is sufficient to note that cosmopolitanism offers advocates of Human Library a useful concept for appreciating what is at work in its dialogic dynamic. Cosmopolitanism supports the activity of Human Library as it strives to embrace the multicultural as well as people who are "multi-abled, multi-sexed, multi-sexual or multi-faith" (Garbutt 2008, 275). Cosmopolitanism is useful because it does not aim to assimilate those who are less powerful in society; rather, it searches for ways of coexisting that acknowledge differences. Via dialogue, Human Library participants seek to engage people in discussions about difference that challenge and disturb hegemonic positions and that recognise that people do not always share the same values. In doing so, Human Libraries

bring people together who might not usually meet and they challenge stereotypes in the hope of deconstructing negative practices that result from the way that norms are negatively applied to difference and create stigma. This practice is what Ang (2008, 237) refers to as she explains that cosmopolitan multiculturalism requires the creation of activities that "stimulate the density of interactions between the different perspectives that rarely come into contact." By bringing people together who rarely meet because of difference, Human Libraries act as "'laboratories' of multicultural cosmopolitan practice worthy of greater study and research" (Garbutt 2008, 275).

Attitudinal Change

There is a need for research into the perception that Human Libraries bring about attitudinal change (Dreher and Mowbray 2012; Garbutt 2008; Kudo et al. 2011). Rendall (2009) reports that participants perceive that Human Libraries produce attitudinal change. Kinsley (2009) also makes this assertion but only demonstrates that participants engage in Human Libraries as a means of discovering new information, exposing themselves to different ways of thinking and that they have been able to ask questions. Kudo et al. (2011, 4) identify three major findings related to attitudinal change. Firstly, Readers increased their knowledge, understanding and empathy regarding groups of people represented by their Human Books. Secondly, Human Books increased their ability to engage in self-reflexivity. Thirdly, the student Organisers were able to transcend *Self–Other* imaginations. These findings share similarities with some of the themes presented in Chapter 2 as well as the cognitive mechanism of increased knowledge and the affective mechanisms of decreased anxiety and increased empathy.

Increased Knowledge, Understanding and Empathy

The Readers in the study by Kudo et al. (2011) report an increase in knowledge, understanding and empathy and demonstrate that that these cognitive and affective mechanisms operate within Human Libraries and contribute to positive intergroup contact outcomes (Brambilla, Hewstone, and Colucci 2013; Hodson 2011; Pettigrew and Tropp 2011). Via an on-site questionnaire, 23 Readers indicated that their knowledge and interest in difference and diversity increased and they reported a greater sense of empathy for their Human Books. In addition to this, 22 Readers agreed that attending the Living Library had contributed to them "discovering the unknown self" (Kudo et al. 2011, 4). The researchers

explain that "[m]ost respondents expressed an awakening of new values and broadening of perspectives through direct conversations with the books" (Kudo et al. 2011, 4). They provide this example of a reflection by a Reader:

> Thinking about homosexuality, many people would think that the normal is heterosexual and that the abnormal is homosexual. I used to think both sexual orientations were OK, but I now realise that I was still making a clear distinction between the two, which is not right (Kudo et al. 2011, 4).

This change in the Reader's attitude is the result of reading a Human Book. Dreher and Mowbray (2012, 47) encounter instances in which knowledge is increased when Human Books remark that they address common misconceptions and "set the record straight." As a result of gaining new knowledge Readers recognise that viewing sexuality in terms of normal and abnormal hinders the way sexuality is understood. Changes are also reported by Human Books.

Increased Self-reflexivity and Transcending Self-Other Imaginations

The attitudinal change that Kudo et al. (2011) recognise in Human Books is increased self-reflexivity. This is also explored by Kinsley (2009) and Ashmore (2010). In Kudo et al.'s research, eleven books returned questionnaires and three of them also completed interviews. Nine of the Human Books reported that the Living Library had helped them to "discover the unknown self" as the result of achieving "greater self-reflexivity through conversations with the readers and other books" (Kudo et al. 2011, 5). The research team illustrates this with two examples:

> This whole world is interesting. [From this opportunity] I received courage to go one step further.

> If I step further with courage, many people will accept me. It's an ordinary thing, but it was nice that I could find it (Kudo et al. 2011, 5).

These two Human Books have experienced changes in attitudes they hold about themselves because their experiences have drawn them into a process of self-reflection.

This encounter with greater self-reflexivity shares some qualities found in the more formal process of reflexive antiracism. This is an alternative model of diversity training, aimed at increasing awareness of racial, ethnic and cultural difference and building skills to promote

diversity and reduce racism at individual, institutional and societal levels (Paradies, Franklin, and Kowal 2013; Kowal, Franklin, and Paradies 2013). Unlike diversity training, reflexive antiracism acknowledges the ambiguities of antiracist practice and offers an alternative that does not succumb to the detrimental effects of essentialism and negative emotional reactions such as guilt and anxiety. Reflexive antiracism does this by forming "a reflexive stance towards one's own and others' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours while striving towards both equanimity in emotional reactions" (Kowal, Franklin, and Paradies 2013, 11). As a consequence of engaging in a process of self-refection about their conversations, these Human Library participants indicate a reduced level of anxiety about meeting people from outgroups which is demonstrated by the way they feel greater acceptance and courage.

A similar process occurs when Human Books develop their titles and descriptions as Kinsley (2009, 22) explains.

> It is important Books be allowed to develop their own details to ensure that their story is represented in the way they wish. This can mean details need to be modified a number of times before the Book is satisfied the catalogue or title is correct. After a Living Library session the Living Book can become aware the details may not be exactly what was intended. The requested changes are easy to do and Books are never discouraged from making changes.

This process ensures that Human Books represent themselves as they wish and that they express their own identities. Ashmore (2010, 3) also comments on this process:

> This concept of revision is extremely significant in that it suggests that in the process of creating a narrative in cooperation with readers, books actually alter their understanding of their own self-appointed topic and what it means to them.

These observations by Ashmore (2010) and Kinsley (2009) demonstrate how Human Books engage in self-reflexivity and change how they understand their own identities and invite their Readers to do the same. This occurs within the dialogic dynamic of the Human Library method.

Ashmore (2010, 3) considers the dynamic in which Human Books and Readers act as co-creators of knowledge and understanding:

> [L]iving library participation requires learning on the part of both the "reader"

and the person being "read" […] Living Library books are not passively "read," but instead are engaged in a dialogic process in which both parties take in and process information, thus gaining new knowledge of both self and other.

In addition to encouraging the development of new knowledge and the process of self-reflexivity, the reading dynamic is central to countering prejudice and stereotypes. The student Organisers in the research project by Kudo et al. (2011) reported similar experiences.

Kudo et al. (2011, 6) refer to attitudinal changes experienced by Organisers as "the transcendence of *Self-Other* imaginations," which are the result of constructing the privileged or powerful *Self* against the denigrated or powerless *Other*. *Self-Other* imaginations highlight what occurs within intergroup bias. The researchers assert that organising their Human Library resulted in "the relational transcendence of the 'us'-'them' dichotomy" (Kudo et al. 2011, 6). This shift is evident in a number of experiences encountered by the Organisers.

While selecting suitable volunteers to be Human Books the Organisers were confronted by the realisation that they were viewing potential Human Books as 'minority' and they recognised that applying this label was itself a form of discrimination. This resulted in a change in attitude for the Organisers:

> Most of us struggled to recruit books until we realised that 'they' have common interests and values with 'us'. They may be blind and unable to walk, or they may have a particular type of appearance or career. However, by listening to their life histories, many of us came to realise that they live just the way we live, and they even tell jokes. After this awakening, or transcending of difference, occurred, the psychological barrier we had constructed in our minds disappeared, and we could communicate much better and more easily with the prospective books (Kudo et al. 2011, 2).

By transcending their attitude to difference as a 'them' and 'us' dynamic the Organisers not only shifted their attitudes they also shifted their behaviour and were able to engage with their Human Books in ways that respect difference.

Several examples are provided by Kudo et al. (2011) of student Organisers who confronted their feelings of discomfort with physical appearance and formed friendships or ongoing contact with Human Books. Dreher and Mowbray (2012) also note this in their study. These examples indicate how involvement with Human Library encourages Organisers to reflect on their identities in relation to other persons:

> Through organising the event, we learned that the *Self–Other* identification and distinction could be made on the basis of various criteria such as age, sex/gender, culture, occupation, physical characteristics, economic status, and even motivation for the Human Library. We also learned that through prolonged engagement with the books in pursuit of a common goal (although a more strategic co-creation of the goal could have been practiced), we could bridge preordained intergroup differences by transcending the *Self–Other* dichotomy and transforming it into interconnectedness (Kudo et al. 2011, 6).

Transcending the *Self-Other* imaginations enabled the Organisers to understand and respect difference in new ways and it also brought them to see themselves in new and richer ways. Additionally, the Organisers not only encountered the transcendence of difference as perpetrators but also as recipients.

During preparations the Organisers experienced feeling like minority members of society as a result of particular dynamics within Japanese society. Examples of such societal dynamics include the way workers view students as economically weak persons and how society views young citizens as half-adults who must obey their seniors. Such instances provided a valuable learning experience and "a productive focus on the issues of privilege and power in the broader societal context" (Kudo et al. 2011, 5). As a result of their involvement with Human Library, the student Organisers became more aware of the impact that difference has for both the perpetrators and recipients of prejudice.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the research literature that is relevant to this thesis. This includes the literature on prejudice, which acknowledges the powerful dynamic of intersectionality and embraces the particular manifestations of prejudice which are most often experienced by the participants in this research project: ableism, homophobia and racism. This knowledge

helps situate the research participants within the broader context of prejudice and how people who identity with different minorities experience discrimination and hostility and struggle against stereotypes and false beliefs on a daily basis. This literature describes the various ways in which prejudice diminishes people's enjoyment of their rights and freedoms and highlights the necessity of involving people who are the targets of prejudice in strategies that counter prejudice (Morris 2001).

Academic researchers examining Human Library are reluctant to use contact theory as a framework. This is partly a response to the contentious history that contact theory has traversed since it was first introduced (Pettigrew and Tropp 2005). Since then, however, a far greater understanding has been gained about contact theory and its outcomes. While it does not offer a panacea for prejudice, neither is it met with the same high level of pessimism that was once the case (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Hodson 2011; Al Ramiah and Hewstone 2013). However, the advances in this knowledge have resulted in an extensive set of criteria that must be satisfied in order for it to be regarded as having successfully reduced prejudice. Given this, as well as the current level of knowledge regarding what Human Library achieves, and the fact that ongoing research into contact theory is at a stage where it requires longitudinal studies, contact theory does not provide a suitable framework for this research.

Contact theory does, however, provide a number of elements that are strongly supported by an extensive body of research into intergroup contact and resonate with concepts that have been developed by the existing research about Human Library (Pettigrew and Tropp 2011). In particular, the cognitive mechanism of increased knowledge and the two affective mechanisms of decreased anxiety and increased empathy resonate with research by Kudo et al. in which participants reported attitudinal change expressed as increased knowledge, understanding and empathy. These mechanisms and concepts provide useful ways for discussing participants' experiences at Human Libraries as do the concepts of spaces, micropublics and cosmopolitanism. This knowledge, although not applied in a prescriptive manner, will be used throughout the thesis' discussion chapters as part of the analysis and interpretation of participants' perceptions of their involvement in Human Libraries.

Chapter 4: Knowledge and Human Rights

This research adopts constructionism as its epistemological framework; it defines the relationship between the inquirer and the known and qualifies the knowledge gathered by the research project as adequate and legitimate. Constructionism has a cross-disciplinary nature which has resulted in its use by scholars and practitioners coming from a great variety of backgrounds (psychology, sociology, anthropology, philosophy and other disciplines) with an equally varied set of goals (Danziger 1997; Burr 2003; Hosking and Morley 2004; Galbin 2014). This highlights the difficulty of expressing the exact nature of constructionism and the fact that not everyone who engages in constructionism embraces all of its assumptions (Danziger 1997; Gergen 1999; Stam 2001; Lock and Strong 2010; Galbin 2014). This chapter explains how constructionism serves this research project in its examination of how Human Library, via its dialogic strategy, challenges prejudice and increases respect for difference as a means of promoting humans' rights and freedoms.

In addition to explaining the thesis' use of constructionism and its approach to human rights, the chapter also explains critical theory. The thesis employs a multidisciplinary approach in examining and responding to experiences within the context of humans' everyday lives and critical theory serves that approach. It is useful for examining the negative manifestation of power and injustice as prejudice and it offers a means of engaging in the production of knowledge that serves emancipatory action. The discussion also introduces the critical pedagogy of Freire (1996), which is situated within critical theory, and makes a significant contribution to the thesis discussion chapters. Freire's use of critical theory is at the heart of his liberation education and is useful for understanding people's social and political realities and their responses to the forces of oppression and it is, therefore, relevant to the work enacted by Human Library and its volunteers.

Constructionism: A Brief Introduction

Constructionism, also referred to as social constructionism, is "the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty 1998, 42). It is the process by

which people describe and explain their world and their place in it (Gergen 1985; Schwandt 1998; Andrews 2012; Galbin 2014; Hosking and Morley 2004). Situated within a constructionist epistemology, this research takes the view that knowledge is not discovered; it is constructed. The world and its objects are filled with potential meaning which is revealed through contact with the human consciousness. This contact results in humans constructing meaning, including the development of scientific theories, as they engage in everyday communication and activities and interpret their world (Crotty 1998; Semin 1990; Guba and Lincoln 1998; Burr 2003). Therefore, constructionism rejects the dualistic notion that truth and meaning are either 'objective' or 'subjective' (Gergen 1985; Galbin 2014); meaning is neither discovered nor created, it is constructed by working with the world and its objects. Meaning is constructed as "the knower and known interact and shape one another" (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 22) and in this process objectivity and subjectivity engage each other.

Constructionism, as a process of engagement with the world, recognises objectivity and subjectivity coming together in an indissoluble relationship of intentionality. This leads one to reject objectivism and subjectivism equally because intentionality situates the interaction between subject and object at the centre of human engagement with the world as they construct meaning about the world (Crotty 1998; Andrews 2012; Galbin 2014). This interplay allows diverse understandings to emerge even out of the same phenomenon (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Meaning is constructed in this interplay between subject and object or text and reader and challenges the existence of a true or valid interpretation (Steedman 1991; Andrews 2012; Burr 2003). It helps shine a light on what occurs during the dynamic dialogues between a Human Book and his or her Reader and when we interpret the meaning of their perceptions of these dialogues. This does not suggest that all interpretations are equal; rather, it indicates that some interpretations are useful and they overshadow interpretations that appear to serve no useful purpose. For this reason, constructionism provides a valuable philosophical foundation for interpretive disciplines in their efforts "to render the world sensible" (Gergen 1985, 270). For example, some interpretations are liberating while others serve to oppress; certain interpretations fulfil and reward whereas others will punish and impoverish. It is, therefore, more appropriate to judge interpretations to be 'useful,' 'liberating,' 'fulfilling' and 'rewarding' rather than 'true' or 'valid' (Crotty 1998). This interpretation of knowledge and meaning unfolds in the context of social reality.

The Contextual Nature of Constructionism

Constructionism regards meaning as social because meaning arises in and out of the interactions of ordinary, everyday life (Liebrucks 2001; Edley 2001; Gergen and Gergen 2003; Hosking and Morley 2004). Humans view the world through the lens of culture: the social reality of everyday life. This lens brings things into view and assigns them with meaning or even makes it possible for humans to remain blind to certain meanings. Because the social reality of human experience is its context, constructionism holds that meaning is socially constructed without exception (Crotty 1998; Galbin 2014; Lock and Strong 2010; Clarke and Cochrane 2005). This is influenced by the complex nature of the social context and culture.

People are socialised in different ways and experience and express culture in multiple manners; this influences how they engage in meaning construction. Therefore, while people inhabit a common world, their perceptions of the same phenomena differ. Two individuals may understand and describe the same phenomena in two different ways because their conceptual backgrounds provide them with different perspectives. Thus, two descriptions can be 'true' simultaneously, although this does not mean that each description is as valid as the other. Because descriptions are always based on a background of historically contingent assumptions and local investigative practices, descriptions select certain aspects of the world and interpret them using their contextual reality (Liebrucks 2001; Lock and Strong 2010; Burr 2003). Contextual reality raises the importance of language for meaning construction.

Discourse

It is through discourse that phenomena are brought into view and given meaning and that the boundaries of social knowledge are established (Talja, Touminen, and Savolainen 2005; Gergen and Gergen 2003; Galbin 2014; Burr 2003). Here discourse is not understood as simple conversation but as "communication in which the participants subject themselves to the force of the better argument, with the view of coming to an agreement about the validity or invalidity of problematic claims" (Crotty 1998, 144). This meaning of conversation highlights the centrality of discourse to constructionism (Talja, Touminen, and Savolainen 2005; Hosking and Morley 2004). It indicates that "conversation is the *sine qua non* for the constitution of the social world, knowledge and identities" (Talja, Touminen, and Savolainen 2005, 89). Its pivotal role exists because language does not merely reflect; it produces. When

people talk about the world they do not provide some disembodied 'truth,' they use the language of their culture and their life experience and they construct accounts of what the world is (Gergen and Semin 1990; Galbin 2014; Lock and Strong 2010; Clarke and Cochrane 2005; Burr 2003). Therefore, from an epistemic position, language, which includes communication in which participants subject themselves to the better argument, is the means by which humans understand their world and construct meaning about the world (Edley 2001; Hosking and Morley 2004; Burr 2003).

Discourses are fashioned over time and they provide definitions and themes which position speakers as they apply meaning to phenomena. Each discourse is positioned and carries assumptions which influence the production of knowledge. This further highlights the contextual nature of constructionism and alerts us to the reality that words do not hold immutable meaning but are shaped by history, use and context (Lock and Strong 2010; Clarke and Cochrane 2005; Phillips and Hardy 2002; Gergen 2001; Bargiela-Chiappini 2011). Therefore, as Kenneth Gergen (2003, 61) makes clear, language and discourse are elements that influence the liberating potential of constructionism:

> The point is not simply to record language usage, but to focus on linguistic forms that affect our well-being, that are potentially injurious and oppressive, or that are releasing and joyful. Here the interest is not so much in accumulating knowledge about a stable phenomenon, but in changing our patterns of language – and thus of cultural life.

Recognising this liberating potential of constructionism, Vivien Burr (1998, 2003) argues that deconstructing categories and classifications urges humans to recognise diversity and difference as encountered in local experiences; this is at the heart of the dialogues at Human Libraries.

However, Burr (1998, 17) offers a word of warning to those who engage in the liberating dynamic offered by constructionism and recognise diversity and difference:

> Social constructionism makes us conscious of the diversity and difference of humanity. I believe that it rightly cautions us against assuming that 'we' (whoever 'we' are) can legitimately speak on behalf of 'them' (whoever 'they' are). This recognition of difference and diversity is in general a positive feature,

since it rightly reminds us that when our common-sense discourse leads us to speak of, for example, 'men', 'lesbians' or 'the deaf' we may be taking part in the accomplishment of collective identities for people which may not be in their interests and which they may wish to resist. Nevertheless, if we insist upon difference and diversity to the extent of denying the possibility of identifying collective interests, we again paralyse ourselves. The extreme view of denying collectivity in the desire to proclaim diversity and difference is potentially dangerous since it threatens our capacity for collective action.

Burr's note of caution speaks directly to this research because it signals issues that are present in its data as participants speak of themselves and others during interviews and interpret how they perceive sameness and difference in humans. Burr's cautionary note demonstrates why adopting a constructionist framework is useful for analysing participants' perceptions about human identity, which result from their readings at Human Libraries as they reflect together on what it means to be human and what it means to be a particular individual human. This is most evident in Chapter 9 which discusses how participants engage in processes of recognising other humans.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is the capacity to reflect and represent reality through language; it is an essential part of meaning construction (Melucci 1996b; Andrews 2012; Lock and Strong 2010; Gergen 2001). It demonstrates that constructing knowledge is a social endeavour and a process of inter-dependence and not of independence. Therefore, constructionist researchers are urged to invite alternative voices and perspectives into the research activity by moving outward into shared languages and recognising the implications of preferred positions (Engward and Davis 2015; Gergen and Gergen 1991; Galbin 2014). Reflexivity is, therefore, marked by the way that power is shared between researchers and subjects via the process of constructing meaning. This dynamic results in 'subjects' becoming 'participants' which expands, rather than ossifies, the interpretation and theorising that is possible within the research context (Gergen and Gergen 1991; Andrews 2012; Phillips and Hardy 2002; Burr 2003; Alley, Jackson, and Shakya 2015). Participants are encouraged to reflect on their situations within the study and to offer their interpretations of events. Reflexivity encourages participants and the researcher to expand and enrich their vocabulary of understanding.

Constructionism, as an epistemology which values discourse and reflexivity as means of encouraging curiosity, suits this research. The research project asks: What does an examination of Human Library inform us about how people can challenge prejudice and increase respect for difference as a means for promoting humans' rights and freedoms? The central data of this research are interviews in which participants of Human Libraries reflect upon and speak about their experiences. This is a contextual process of meaning construction, shaped by discourse and reflexivity, aimed at making meaning about how Human Library enacts its claim to increase respect for difference and human rights via its anti-prejudice strategy. With this explanation of the research's constructionist epistemology in mind, we consider how human rights fit within this research and its framework.

An Epistemological Approach to Human Rights

Advancing the cause of human rights requires arguments founded in reason. To do otherwise would fail to persuade people to support human rights causes (Langlois 2013; Kim 2012; Ackerly 2008). Good reasoning is necessary in this task because the idea of human rights covers a complex set of issues that are practical and urgent on one hand, and theoretical and abstract on the other. Some argue that human rights "emerge as 'struggle concepts'" (Stammers 2009, 3) and are "a device for thinking about the real, and for expressing our thought" (Freeman 2011, 3). To try and advance what is practical and urgent without having established a solid grounding for the theoretical and abstract is to rush ahead on shifting ground (Freeman 1994). The need for such a grounding is made all the more evident when we recognise that there is no agreement regarding the philosophical foundations of human rights no universally accepted approach to human rights, rather there exists a wide variety of human rights positions (Landman 2009; Freeman 1994; Ackerly 2008; Menon 2010; Gorman 2003). The following discusses human rights foundations and the research project's chosen philosophical position that views human rights as constructed.

Human Rights Foundations

Human rights are often understood as the rights one has due to being human (Donnelly 2007; Orend 2002; Ackerly 2008). For example, Jack Donnelly (2012, 19) states that human rights "are held by all human beings, irrespective of any rights or duties they may (or may not) have as citizens, members of families, workers, or parts of any public or private organisation or association." As already stated, however, the term 'human rights' is not so simply

understood. To better understand the contested idea of human rights it is necessary to examine the terms 'human' and 'rights' (Orend 2002). Quite clearly there can be "no human rights without the 'human'" (Douzinas 2000, 183). Scholars, therefore, remind us of the importance of asking: "[w]hat does it mean to be human?" (Tibbitts 1996, 428); "[c]an we have a concept of rights without having a definition of who or what is human?" (Douzinas 2000, 184); and "[a]re we so confident that we know what being 'human' in the relevant sense really is?" (Orend 2002, 38).

Understanding human in human rights is problematic because the term human denotes particular conceptions of the human being (Freeman 1994; Menon 2010; Gorman 2003). Human nature is itself problematic because there is no absolute agreement about its relevant sense and that the categories of human being and human person are contentious (Griffin 2008; Donnelly 2013). Therefore, human nature, used as a criteria-providing term for human rights, raises problems. Considering the relationship between human and human rights, Griffin (2008) and Donnelly (2013) each assert that human rights finds their source in human nature as an expression of humanity's moral nature. Donnelly (2013, 15) states, "[h]uman rights are less about the way people 'are' than about what they want to become. They are about moral rather than natural or juridical persons." The human pursuit of becoming can take place within a variety of human rights approaches. There are numerous philosophical and disciplinary approaches to human rights but three schools dominate as foundations for human rights: essentialist, functionalist and constructionist. The following considers the essentialist and functionalist traditions.

The essentialist school regards rights as derived from natural or divine law. This paradigm recognises the existence of natural rights which are immutable because they proceed from 'higher laws' of nature existing within the law of God (Goodhart 2013; Langlois 2013; Hayden 2001; Landman 2009; Gorman 2003; Mahoney 2007). These rights, held by individuals and derived from natural law, recognise that all human beings are equal or "that we are all made in God's image, that we are free to act for reasons, especially for reasons of good and evil. We are rational and moral agents" (Griffin 2001, 309). One of the most significant outcomes of this view of the human person is the link it makes between human freedom which has become embedded in political and social thought throughout history (Griffin 2001; Menon 2010; Mahoney 2007). The essentialist position, however, has not

remained unchallenged or unchanged. In the seventeenth century the essentialist paradigm of natural law underwent secular development when the idea of 'right reason' was introduced. The theory of natural rights argues that humans share some basic fundamental rights simply by virtue of the fact that they are rational creatures (Hayden 2001; Langlois 2013; Gorman 2003). This early expression of human rights, formed in the philosophies of natural law and natural rights, has continued to significantly influence contemporary human rights frames.

Modern human rights emerged out of the seedbed of natural law. This is expressed in the French Declaration of Independence (1789) which claimed that rights are "natural, inalienable and sacred." Shortly after, the American Declaration of Independence (1789) affirmed its belief that "all men are created equal, [and] are endowed by their Creator with unalienable Rights." Decades later, these words echoed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) (Arieli 2002; Dicke 2002; Kohen 2007). The Preamble commences: "[w]hereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." Article 1 states: "[a]ll human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." These examples, along with numerous human rights covenants and treaties, highlight the formative role that natural law and natural rights have played, and continue to play, in how human rights are understood by many. Terms such as 'inherent dignity' and 'inalienable rights' are evidence of the link that still exists between human rights' numerous contemporary expressions and its natural law origins (Shestack 2000; Douzinas 2000; Hayden 2001; Ackerly 2008; Arieli 2002).

The functionalist tradition represents a departure from an approach to human rights that is dominated by natural law. Functionalism appeals to the forces of legislation and state apparatuses. It understands human rights to be those that are enshrined in law and elevates the roles of international and state institutions in providing and protecting these rights. For some, it is an attractive approach because it provides authorities with the ability to legislate human rights and so enforce their observance. The United Nations (UN) and its human rights program are seen as playing a pivotal role within the functionalist approach to human rights. For example, Malcolm Waters (1995, 34) explains that the arrival of the UDHR meant that "[g]overnments were no longer entirely sovereign and could no longer govern their

populations in an authoritarian fashion, but rather, were required to negotiate in relation to popular sovereignty." Groups that had previously been denied the right to claim entitlements were now able to agitate for their rights and freedoms (Waters 1995; Fredman 2001). This challenged the existing model of citizenship which states could use to exclude non-citizens such as "women, racial or ethnic minorities, indigenes, children, the mentally and physically less able, resident aliens, prisoners, members of the nobility and so on" (Waters 1995, 34). It challenged such terms as 'our kind of people' and 'people like us'. In doing so, people were able to challenge notions of who counts as a fellow human being and who counts as a rational agent and, as such, counts as a member of our moral community (Rorty 1999).

The essentialist and functionalist schools contain positive qualities as philosophical foundations for human rights but they are not adopted by this research because they include significant faults and weaknesses. The essentialist school's dependence on natural law renders it unsuitable because, as noted by Costas Douzinas (2000, 246), "the old grounds, the good, God, transcendental man or abstract humanity, no longer command wide acceptance. The post-modern condition seeks foundations that do not look foundational." The pluralism of the contemporary world, which covers moral, political and religious views, adds support to this position (Hayden 2001; Landman 2009; Ackerly 2008; Menon 2010; Mahoney 2007; Kohen 2007). This shift in paradigm needs to be taken seriously because if we argue our case for human rights starting from a philosophical foundation that is widely dismissed, then our chances of success are already seriously impeded. Anthony Langlois (2013) supports this criticism by highlighting the frailty of universalist rhetoric and the liberal rights tradition found in such documents as the UDHR. He states, "[t]his position is normatively universal, to be sure; but it is not shared universally by all human persons, and the traditions and communities in which they live" (Langlois 2013, 16). These reasons provide sound arguments against essentialism as a philosophical foundation for human rights because it no longer matches the worldview of a growing number of people and will not attract their support.

Others argue that the lack of universal support that essentialism provides human rights might be corrected by embracing functionalism. However, like essentialism, functionalism carries serious limitations. These emerge from the state-centred structure of the international human rights system (Stammers 2009). Two fundamental points demonstrate the limiting nature of

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the functionalist approach. Firstly, the fact that states have been key in what and how human rights have been articulated in the international human rights treaties indicates their complicity in the weaknesses therein. Secondly, while rights are binding in international law and states are obliged to respect these rights, there are no significant international enforcement mechanisms. Judicial enforcement is provided by national courts, not international courts, and many countries' national legal systems are ineffective (Donnelly 2013).

These limitations of the functionalist approach are amplified by the warning that it runs the risk of reducing human rights to legal rights and of establishing an environment shaped by legal positivism in which human rights only exist as long as there are laws, agreements and institutions that insist on their existence (Langlois 2013). Understood in this way, functionalism is also referred to as the 'states obligations' tradition. This highlights the link between human rights and government policies and the legal system through the provision of bills, charters, legislation, the court system, policing and government programmes that address issues relating to education, health, housing and social security (Ife 2010; Landman 2009; Harrelson-Stephans and Callaway 2007). One of the significant criticisms of the functionalist school, or 'states obligations' tradition, is that it is vulnerable to the forces of legal positivism which are capable of removing the moral basis of human rights and replacing it with a state's legal system (Ife 2010; Landman 2009; Ackerly 2008; Menon 2010). In such an environment, which is in the hands of the authority of the day, it is just as possible to remove the provision of human rights as it is to ensure them. In this way, functionalism carries the risk of enabling states to ignore or abuse human rights in favour of their own interests. Even though international law argues that every person has human rights, states can try to diminish their commitment to their obligation by arguing via legal positivism that people have rights due to their legal status and therefore deny rights to those persons they define as pseudo-humans and non-citizens. In situations such as this, the functionalist tradition can be used to ignore the moral status of persons arguing that it is acting within the parameters of a person's legal status.

Focussing on human rights as law can encourage a climate in which they are understood to represent no more than a form of legal instrumentalism (Stammers 2009; Gorman 2003; Shestack 2007). In such an environment, legal positivism establishes a foundation and an

approach to human rights that can only be as good as its current source of authority, be that international law or the legal systems of individual states. This demonstrates the inherent danger in philosophically divorcing a legal system from a society's ethical and moral foundations. Legal positivism establishes a culture in which the law must be obeyed, regardless of its morality or the extent to which it disregards the lives of individuals (Shestack 2000). While this does not render functionalism or the 'states obligations' tradition worthless, it raises significant problems for this research as it examines how Human Library can promote humans' rights and freedoms at the most fundamental level of society: the grassroots.

Given the limitations of both essentialism and functionalism in their approaches to understanding human rights, there is a need to look for an approach without such shortcomings. Moreover, it requires an approach that resonates with the Human Library strategy, which rellies on dialogue and the co-construction of knowledge to challenge prejudice, increase, respect for difference and promote humans' rights and freedoms. To this end, the following discusses the constructionist tradition and its approach to human rights as fashioned by shared and negotiated knowledge of what it means to be human and to have rights.

Human Rights as Constructed

Just as constructionism views knowledge and meaning as constructed by human practices within social contexts, so it regards human rights. Constructionism approaches human rights as "a view of human rights that shows that such 'rights' are not simply givens, but products of human social interaction, with all its imbalances and imperfections" (Short 2013, 102). As such, it recognises the dynamic nature of society as the context in which human rights are continually "negotiated, defined and redefined at all levels of society" (Ife 2010, 76). Whereas the essentialist approach relies upon the immutability of human nature and the functionalist approach focuses on human rights law, the constructionist approach to human rights is fashioned by humans' shared and negotiated knowledge of what it means to be human, how humans expect to be treated and how humans should treat one another (Ife 2010; Stammers 1999; Miller 2010; Waters 1995; Meyer 2002).

The constructionist approach provides human rights with a more credible foundation than that of essentialism. Constructionism understands human rights as negotiated knowledge whereas essentialism's understanding of human rights relies on supernatural knowledge, recognised in its natural law origins. As outlined above, this foundation is impossible to endorse for a substantial number of people. Constructionism offers a more defensible philosophical foundation for human rights because it requires an inclusive approach to negotiating knowledge and understanding. The constructionist view of humanity is one recognises it as the product of its own construction, reconstruction and endorsement. It does not set its faith in any power other than which is found in humanity itself. Therefore, it advances the view that if groups can settle on particular principles as a means of governing human social arrangements, then there should be no reason to doubt the morality of those principles. Within this paradigm, human rights are an expression of the universalisation of human interests (Waters 1995; Kohen 2007).

These interests operate in a process of negotiated knowledge and understanding that aims to include humans in the construction of their world and their place within it. This process of inclusion stands in contrast to the essentialist insistence that human knowledge and understanding emerge from a supernatural force which humans come to recognise and use as their motivation for developing a human rights culture. It acknowledges that in an increasingly pluralistic world resulting from the increasing momentum provided by globalisation, this link between an immutable human nature as the foundation for human rights is embraced by fewer and fewer people as they seek to be more involved in the development of their own futures and sometimes in the limiting of the futures of other humans. This move away from relying on essentialism's dependence on an overarching force as the foundation for human rights is also relevant when considering the functionalist tradition.

The constructionist tradition supports people in their response to the flaws in the functionalist tradition, outlined above. One way it does this is to account for the actions of social movements and activists engaged in the struggle for people's rights and freedoms. In setting out international standards of human rights the UDHR opened up an alternative space to that marked out by state legal systems and citizenship; a space that indicated worldwide ethical consensus regarding the existence of rights and the need to respect them (Mahoney

2007; Chandler 2002; Harrelson-Stephans and Callaway 2007; Arieli 2002)(Kohen 2007). This allowed social movements and activists the possibility to act to address inadequate responses to human rights and freedoms by individual states, especially as the result of legal positivism, and have their entitlement claims recognised as legitimate. Organisations and activists that adapt universal human rights presented within international instruments to their local contexts demonstrate this constructionist response to functionalism. They provide examples of how a constructionist approach to human rights can explain how grassroots activists work to transplant internationally circulating human rights into local cultures; that is, to remake human rights in the vernacular (Merry 2006). Social movements fit within this constructionist space because they are "the main mechanism for the expression of expectations for the redress of disadvantage by the establishment of entitlements" (Waters 1995, 34-35). This is demonstrated by the way that activist social movements have used the UDHR as their constitutional reference point, by using the language of victims and the dispossessed, as they sought to advance claims in the interests of groups who had come to be labelled as second-class or non-citizens (Chandler 2002). In the West this has mostly occurred via claims that have been egalitarian in character, as made evident by movements such as civil rights, women's liberation, gay rights, indigenous land rights and the anti-apartheid movement (Waters 1995).

While social movements do use constitutional appeals their real success is achieved via political effectiveness. This shifts the spotlight from the instrumental dimension of human rights and shines it on the expressive dimensions of human rights and human rights activism (Stammers 2009; Maddison and Scalmer 2006). Human rights define the conditions that are necessary for a person to live a life that is dignified and worthy of a human being but they can remain utopian ideals unless people create realistic practices that bring these ideals to life (Donnelly 2013). Activist social movements, such as those listed above, are examples of how various groups have contributed to the construction and realisation of human rights by demanding, "as a matter of entitlement (rights), the social changes required to realise the underlying moral vision of human nature" (Donnelly 2013). Although their human rights may have always existed, they remained utopian ideals until people engaged in a process of constructing the conditions that were conducive to their realisation and enjoyment. This demonstrates how people engage in "the broader 'expressive' project of building a human rights culture from below across the whole of social relations" (Stammers 2009, 224).

Expressive activism contributes to the institutional recognition of rights via a process of construction not because governments concede to claimant groups' demands due to their moral standing but because groups employ moral correctness as a wedge that undermines the authority required for governments to act. In doing so they are able to threaten a government's chances of attaining electoral victory. For Waters (1995, 35), it is important to stress this point because "the rationalistic and foundationalist theories of human rights might tend to derogate the energetic and often courageous efforts of rights movement activists [but it] is these activists who have been primarily movers in persuading governments to accede to the treaties and to put teeth into the enforcement process." This contribution by social movements and activists to human rights further highlights the value of adopting a constructionist approach to human rights.

Social movements demonstrate how human rights are constructed in the context of societies and cultures as they face challenges in human relations and power structures (Stammers 1999). Social movements are such a powerful means of shaping our conception of human rights that human rights cannot be properly understood apart from social movements and the struggles in which they engage:

> [T]he historical emergence and development of human rights needs to be understood and analysed in the context of social movement struggles against extant relations and struggles of power. In other words, this is an important element of the answer to the question 'where do human rights come from?' (Stammers 2009, 2-3).

This assertion encourages the use of social movements as a lens for examining the relationship between grassroots struggles and human rights. This is a useful lens for viewing concepts constructed by this research and is discussed in the next chapter which explains how Human Library is situated within the context of contemporary social movements. It enables the research to bring into focus the question of where human rights come from. When this research refers to the construction of human rights it does not limit its understanding of rights to the instrumental dimension of human rights. It refers also to the expressive dimension of human rights by which people contribute to the construction of a modern human rights culture which is understood as a body of symbols, ideas, values, language and practices that support the conditions necessary for attaining a life worthy of a human (Rorty 1999; Maddison and Scalmer 2006; Stammers 2009). It emerged in response

to the atrocities of World War II and announced a new environment for human rights (Rorty 1999; Gorman 2003; Harrelson-Stephans and Callaway 2007; Kohen 2007). It is a culture that enables human rights to emerge from below as struggle concepts as people engage in everyday social interactions aimed at advancing people's understanding and enjoyment of humans' rights and freedoms. A social movements lens is useful for viewing such a culture.

The constructionist approach to human rights acknowledges that human rights are dynamically constructed in specific cultural and historical contexts and this includes local culture understood as the day-to-day context of particular communities and societies (Waters 1995; Ife 2010). Constructionism's respect for the contextual nature of human rights qualifies it as a highly relevant means of approaching human rights in general and for shaping the epistemological framework of this research in particular. The contemporary world provides contexts that are pluralistic and embody a variety of moral, political, philosophical and religious views that wield influence and vie for attention (Hayden 2001; Ackerly 2008; Gorman 2003; Mahoney 2007). Beyond the broad context of the contemporary world, human rights are firmly grounded in the experiences of everyday life and are negotiated and renegotiated in specific societal contexts.

The flaws and abuses to which individual states and societies are vulnerable illuminate the importance of developing a culture of human rights rather than relying on legislation and state mechanisms (Ife 2010; Rorty 1999). Such a culture would have to emerge from particular historical contexts and would respond to the particular human rights issues, experienced in everyday life, existing within those contexts. Such a culture appreciates the contextual nature of human rights and is particularly conducive to the pursuit of human rights from the bottom-up. This pursuit of rights commences with people recognising their experience of human rights in day-to-day social situations which includes an awareness of the way that politicians, lawyers, social campaigners and theorists contribute to this context. Moving beyond this point of recognition, people then identify the higher principles that are required to explain the moral weight of their rights claims so that they can work to resolve the conflicts which exist within their particular societal context (Griffin 2001). This opposes a top-down approach which starts with an overarching principle from which human rights are said to be derived. The contextual encounter is the most valid means of expressing what is understood by human rights because the social life of humans (their context), which is

demonstrated by dynamic interactions between Human Books and Readers at Human Libraries, is the most likely source of verification of what we understand by human rights and how they are constructed (Griffin 2001).

Critical theory is useful in an examination of the social life of humans and resonates with an understanding of human rights as constructed. Critical theory involves an engagement in a dialectical process; it is a spiral of action and reflection: reviewing history, confronting ignorance and gathering informed insights. Critical theorists examine experiences of everyday life to confront power and injustice in all its forms to advance the process of transforming utopian ideals into liberating realities. It provides a valuable way of examining the perceptions that Human Library participants form out of their dialogic encounters.

Critical Theory

Critical theory, like the constructionist approach to human rights, engages a multidisciplinary approach in examining and responding to cultural contexts. Critical theorists advise against defining it too specifically to "avoid the production of blueprints of socio-political and epistemological beliefs" (Kincheloe and McLaren 2005, 303). Three matters are considered regarding the use of critical theory in this research: a general approach to critical theory; power and injustice; and critical theory and Freire (1996).

A General Approach to Critical Theory

In broad terms, critical theory "is a multidisciplinary framework with the implicit goal of advancing the emancipatory function of knowledge" (Leonardo 2004, 11). Critical theory seeks to understand knowledge within the context of humans' everyday lives. Its concern is the mix of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender circumstances and values that form the wide variety of phenomena that attract its interest (Guba and Lincoln 1998). As these circumstances constantly change and develop they require a matching style of inquiry. Critical theory provides such a response because it functions as an ongoing project and does not seek to attain a definitive end. Critical theory engages in a dialectical process that operates as a spiral of action and reflection as it reviews history, confronts ignorance and gathers informed insights (Leonardo 2004; Kincheloe and McLaren 2005; Crotty 1998).

The ongoing spiral of reflection and action undertaken by critical theorists critiques society and culture and the circumstances and values found therein. It does this based on the following basic assumptions: all thought is primarily the product of socially and historically situated power relations; facts must be appreciated within the context of the values and ideologies out of which they are constructed; the relationships between concept and object and signifier and signified is not static but are the result of the dynamic created by production and consumption; language is a primary fabricator of subjectivity understood as conscious and unconscious awareness; society favours certain groups over others in multiple ways and the oppression that results from this is encountered most forcefully when those who are subordinated accept this social phenomenon as natural or unavoidable; focusing on only one manifestation of oppression ignores the interconnected nature of oppression; and mainstream research practices are vulnerable to participating in the perpetuation of structures aligned with class, race, and gender oppression (Kincheloe and McLaren 2005). Critical theorists remain alert to these basic assumptions and examine the occurrences of everyday life to respond to negative manifestations of power and injustice and advance the emancipatory function of knowledge.

Power and Injustice

Critical theorists connect theory to the experiences of everyday life within a process of emancipation. They are particularly interested in power and injustice and how they relate to economy, race, class, gender, ideologies, discourses, education, religion, social institutions, and how cultural dynamics interact to construct societies. They interrogate commonly held values and assumptions, challenge conventional social structures and engage in social action (Kincheloe and McLaren 2005; Crotty 1998). In pursuing such inquiries, researchers invite participants, ideally sharing this role themselves, to confront false consciousness, consider new ways of understanding and create new ways of acting for change. As such, critical theorists regard their research as a transformative endeavour aimed at understanding power and oppression, confronting injustice and inequality and encouraging the empowerment of individuals. Freire (1996) exemplifies this transformative endeavour.

Critical Social Theory and Paulo Freire

The unique contribution of critical social theory (CST) to pedagogy is its power to change it from a process of knowledge transmission to knowledge transformation. CST unites social

theory and critical theory. It situates criticism at the centre of knowledge production and cultivates students in their ability to question, deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge in pursuit of emancipation (Leonardo 2004). With this focus on emancipation, CST draws on Freire's (1996) educational philosophy. Freire developed a philosophical foundation for liberation education as well as a strategy of critical praxis which shaped his commitment to working for the emancipation of oppressed peoples and their communities. Freire's critical theory is at the heart of liberation education as a means of understanding people's economic, social and political realities and finding appropriate responses to these forces of oppression (Darder 2002). The following discusses how Freire's use of critical theory offers a solid theoretical contribution to the epistemological framework of this research and Chapter 5 extends this by discussing how Freire's concepts of conscientisation, Humanisation, praxis and dialogue contribute to this thesis.

Freire (1996) popularised the use of CST in education and is often considered the most influential theorist of liberation education and the practice of critical pedagogy (McLaren 1999). He is regarded as the founder of CST and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is its first text. Freire's epistemological position forms a critical understanding of history and regards knowledge as always constructed within the context of history via the day-to-day reality of the material world (Roberts 2000). Freire, therefore, holds that our knowledge of our world and ourselves is fashioned by the events that shape our ongoing understanding of the world. This ongoing process produces our social world within the material reality of history which is comprised of economic, social, political and cultural norms, structures and institutions. Humans engage in this dialectical interplay and construct knowledge with the aim of entering into transforming action and directing the course of history (Darder 2002; McLaren 1999; Roberts 2000). This transforming activity results from "an epistemology that undermines established authority" (Margonis 2003, 148) and via this Freire offers the poor "philosophical and methodological tools allowing them to perceive afresh, analyse, and transform an oppressive reality into a liberating one" (Blackburn 2000, 3-4).

This activist pedagogy is made evident by the stages of Freire's (1996, 36-37) liberation education:

> The pedagogy of the oppressed, as a humanist and libertarian pedagogy, has
> two distinct stages. In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression

and through praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy for all people in the process of permanent liberation. In both stages, it is always through action in depth that the culture of domination is culturally confronted. In the first stage this confrontation occurs through the change in the way the oppressed perceived the world of oppression; in the second stage, through the expulsion of the myths created and developed in the old order, which like specters haunt the new structure emerging from the revolutionary transformation.

These stages reveal the dynamic nature of Freire's activist pedagogy which seeks to achieve revolution via praxis (reflection and action) directed at the transformation of oppressive structures. The dynamism inherent in Freire's theoretical concepts means that they cannot be understood as distinct entities that do not interact. Appreciating Freire's critical pedagogy via his theoretical concepts requires moving back and forth between each of the concepts: conscientisation, Humanisation, praxis and dialogue. The dynamic nature of Freire's critical pedagogy, seen in the relationship between each of its concepts, highlights its usefulness as a collection of lenses for examining knowledge in this research. This is discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This research adopts a constructionist epistemology and regards knowledge as constructed by humans as they interact with their world. This shapes how it approaches human rights and highlights the importance of asking: "What does it mean to be human?" (Tibbitts 1996, 428). Such a question is important to this research because it resonates with the experiences of people, including those who take on the roles of Human Book and Reader, as they pursue their human rights and freedoms in a way that demonstrates that they are "less about the way people 'are' than about what they want to become" (Donnelly 2013, 15). Constructionism acknowledges the influential role of language and discourse in the fashioning of such knowledge and, therefore, is useful for the study of the Human Library dialogues at the heart of this research. These dialogues, including the dialogues between participant and researcher, must be approached while remaining alert to the temptation of assuming that 'we' may speak on behalf of 'them' as we pursue the potential liberation offered by constructionism as it urges the recognition of diversity, difference and collectivity.

This research acknowledges the support that essentialism and functionalism offer human rights foundations but their weaknesses exclude each of them from acting as its epistemological framework. Unlike these two approaches, constructionism requires an inclusive approach to human rights which invites humans to negotiate the recognition and enjoyment of their rights and freedoms within the context of everyday life. This approach allows for an understanding of social movements and activists, a context in which Human Library functions, as engaging in the ongoing development of human rights in new ways. It highlights an alternative space in which humans may challenge existing relationships and power structures including the boundaries of state legal systems and the instrumental dimension of human rights. It is a space that encourages the ongoing construction of a modern human rights culture from the bottom-up that challenges the way in which people's enjoyment of their rights and freedoms is impeded.

Critical theorists examine experiences of everyday life as an emancipatory process of confronting power and injustice in all its forms including experiences that impede people's rights and freedoms. Freire (1996) exemplifies and demonstrates the transformative nature of critical theory in his philosophy of liberation education and he offers this research "philosophical and methodological tools allowing [it] to perceive afresh, analyse, and transform an oppressive reality into a liberating one" (Blackburn 2000, 3-4).

Chapter 5: Framing the Research: Social Movements and Critical Pedagogy

Chapter 1 presented the thesis map using the metaphor of story and it introduced constructionism as the epistemological framework or tool for reading the scenes of knowledge encountered throughout this research. This chapter provides two major frames as tools for examining, discussing and making meaning of this knowledge: social movements and Freire's critical pedagogy.

Introducing Social Movements

The way the founders and Organisers describe Human Library, presented in previous chapters, demonstrates that they regard it as an international non-profit organisation that uses a method of one-on-one dialogue to reduce prejudice and increase respect for diversity and human rights (Human Library 2012e, 2012c). As such Human Library is an activist organisation within the anti-prejudice movement. This research draws on this and uses the phenomena of social movements, and the concepts that are used to examine them, to frame its discussion of its findings. Social movements provide a useful way of examining the dynamic production of rights cultures and their social contexts. A social movements framework challenges the traditional statist framing of human rights and shines a light on the way in which grass-roots activism is at the heart of profound human rights advances (Clement 2011). Moreover, a social movements framework supports this research project in its interest in how people contribute to human rights advances via their involvement in grass-roots activism, in particular as a contribution to the modern human rights culture and how people enjoy their rights and freedoms. Social movements, therefore, are a useful way of framing this research about Human Library.

Human Library and Social Movements

The idea that social movement struggles are at the heart of human rights resonates with much of what is encountered in this research and with the assertion that Human Libraries function within the anti-prejudice movement (Stammers 1995, 1999, 2009). Anti-movements define themselves against their object of opposition. It establishes an adversarial relationship between opposing forces (Chesters and Welsh 2010). Anti-movements, for example the

antiracism movement, arise and struggle against power, expressed as prejudice, in the pursuit of human rights. Given its aim of countering prejudice, Human Library is situated within the anti-prejudice movement. The idea that social movement struggles are at the heart of human rights resonates with Human Library's grassroots approach to answering the fundamental questions: 'where do human rights come from?' and 'what are human rights?' (Stammers 1995, 1999, 2009). Below, further attention will be given to how this framework serves this research but at this point it is necessary to provide some explanation of what is meant by social movements.

Social Movements

Broadly understood, movements are the effects of the historical context from which they emerge and a product of particular events, be they economic crises or contradictions within a social system (Melucci 1996a). Alberto Melucci (1980, 212) approaches social movements via theories of collective action and attributes them to "the breakdown of the social system or to the formation of new interests or of new forms of solidarity and collective identity." Prior to the coining of the term 'social movements', the phenomena were broadly regarded as various types of collective action aimed at struggling to transform social values, resources or institutionalised norms or social roles. Movements are the result of political struggles and, as a result, they have redrawn the boundaries of contemporary political activity (Melucci 1980, 1989, 1996a, 1996b; Maddison and Scalmer 2006).

In the 1960s new forms of collective action began to emerge which moved beyond the pursuit of change based on class conflict associated with the process of production. These new forms of collective action heralded "a provocative and innovative reconceptualisation of the meaning of social movements" (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield 1994, 3). They meant that people who had been treated as marginal social actors such as students, women, black and ethnic minorities, young people, lesbians, gays and bisexuals, and the unemployed constituted a "new radical constituency with the capacity for systemic social change" (Chesters and Welsh 2010, 12). In response to this context of new struggles against previously ignored grievances and aspirations, Melucci introduced the term 'new social movements' (Chesters 2012; Melucci 1989; Chesters and Welsh 2010). Examples of the new social movements that emerged during this period of social transformation include "peace movements, student movements, anti-nuclear energy protests, minority nationalism, gay

rights, women's rights, animal rights, alternative medicine, fundamentalist religious movements, and New Age and ecological movements" (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield 1994, 3). New social movements are not any form of practical entity, they conceptualise group action.

Scholars conceptualise the term in a variety of ways but it is possible to ascertain a set of core elements, demonstrated in the following description. Social movements act as collectives, with varying degrees of organisation and continuity, beyond institutional or organisational boundaries to challenge or defend existing forms of authority (institutional and/or cultural) operating within the context to which they belong (group, organisation, society, culture, or world order) (Snow, Soule, and Kriesi 2004). At the heart of this conceptualisation is the recognition that collective action develops into a 'movement' as participants reject boundaries that have been established through the institutionalisation of rules and the formalisation of roles (Darnovsky, Epstein, and Flacks 1995).

The relationship between social movement and social movement organization (SMO) does not mean that one signifies the other. Social movements represent the opinions and beliefs, held by a population, that form around the desire to change certain aspects of its social structure related to the way society deals with reward and distribution. A SMO is a tangible product of these beliefs and opinions that is formed through the identification of goals that match the desires of a social movement and aim to implement those goals. Therefore, SMOs are not movements; rather, they represent an important force within the overall movement because they organise and activate a movement's resources and act as the carriers of a movement's ideas (Zald and McCarthy 1987; Clement 2011). Therefore, when this research examines Human Library's efforts to increase respect for difference and human rights, it is examining a SMO that fits within a social movement. Human Library, as a SMO, fits within the dynamic of the anti-prejudice movement and uses its Human Books to carry the movement's ideas of confronting prejudice and stereotypes and increasing respect for difference and human rights. A unique feature of Human Library is that it is situated within a social movement (anti-prejudice) and it gathers together participants belonging to other social movements (anti-racism, respect for ethnicity, women's rights, LGBTIQ rights, (dis)ability rights and respect for mental illness, among others). The anti-prejudice

movement is what some social movement scholars refer to as a movement of movements (Cox and Nilsen 2007; Chesters and Welsh 2010).

The arrival of the new social movements offered a new lens through which to analyse and critique power. Viewed through this new lens, power can be analysed and critiqued beyond the confines of politics and economics and, in addition to these, the validity of the personal and the cultural can be recognised in the work of social transformation (Darnovsky, Epstein, and Flacks 1995). The NSMs were distinctly different to the previous forms of social movements and were often dismissed and ridiculed as single-issue movements. However, while each NSMs did focus on its own particular issue, illustrated in the list above, what they had in common was a focus on oppression which had been silent in stories of liberals, social democrats and Marxists alike (Stammers 2009). The NSMs expanded the social analysis and critique of power to include five sites of power: economic, political, sex and gender, ethnicity and the control of information and knowledge. Viewing Human Library through a social movements framework is useful for exploring the knowledge produced via the thesis' use of constructivist grounded theory and for appreciating how social movements are related to human rights. Given the significant role that power plays in the field of human rights, Freire's critical pedagogy provides another useful means of framing the discussion of this research into Human Library.

Freire's Critical Pedagogy

Freire's critical pedagogy indicates a dynamic relationship of theoretical concepts. They cannot be drawn upon as a means of discussing and appreciating what is produced by this research simply by equating or aligning them with the concepts it produces; it requires a dynamic interaction in which the research's concepts are discussed by drawing on the multiple theoretical concepts offered by Freire: conscientisation, Humanisation, praxis and dialogue. However, for the purpose of structure and presentation for the discussion of Freire's concepts, the following discusses each concept under its own heading.

Conscientisation

Freire's epistemology operates out of an ontology that regards humans as distinct due to their consciousness (Blackburn 2000). Humans are conscious of themselves and their existence

within space and time and this leads them to recognise their capacity for creative thinking which makes possible "the capacity to transform rather than merely adapt to reality" (Blackburn 2000, 5). This denotes Freire's revolutionary praxis of *conscientização* which empowered workers and peasants to act collectively in pursuit of social and political transformation (McLaren 2002). Peter McLaren (1994, 200) defines *conscientização* by drawing on Freire's (1985) *The Politics of Education*:

> [A] process that invites learners to engage the world and others critically in an act of dialogical transformation; this project implies a fundamental 'recognition of the world, not as a "given" world, but as a world dynamically "in the making" (Freire 1985, 106). The ultimate goal of such a process is for learners to 'exercise the right to participate consciously in the sociohistorical transformation of their society" (Freire 1985, 50).

Conscientisation then is a dynamic relationship between the human consciousness and the world (Shor and Freire 1987; Roberts 2000). Precisely because it is a process that engages critically with the world, it is a process involving the 'other.'

Critical consciousness, far from a consideration of the consciousness of the individual, is an examination of the interaction of oppressors and oppressed. Critical pedagogy confronts what Freire terms "the banking concept of education" (Freire 1996, 54). Essentially, banking education denotes a paradigm in which teachers teach and students learn in an environment that is defined by the teacher knowing everything and the student knowing nothing. In this paradigm the teacher is active and the student is passive. This relationship illustrates Freire's assertion that oppressors only exist as long as they appear before their opposite, the oppressed (Roberts 2000). Freire argues that the more students work within this depositing system the less they develop critical consciousness and the possibility of their intervening in the world and transforming it. He states, "[t]he more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them" (Freire 1996, 54). In this system of education it is in the interests of the oppressors not to change the consciousness of the oppressed to avoid them critically examining their situation so they may be more easily led to adapt to the existing situation and may be more easily dominated. Furthermore, they are considered as "marginal persons who deviate from the general configuration of a "good, organised, and just" society" (Freire 1996, 55). They are seen as marginals who have forsaken a good

society and are now in need of integration into that society. Freire (1996, 55) provides this response:

> The truth is, however, that the oppressed are not "marginals," are not people living "outside" society. They have always been "inside" – inside the structure which made them "beings for others." The solution is not to "integrate" them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become "beings for themselves." Such transformation, of course, would undermine the oppressors' purposes; hence their utilization of the banking concept of education to avoid the threat of student *conscientização*.

The banking concept works to negate the human ontological vocation to become more fully human and instead works to turn humans into uncritical automatons. This contradiction in the purpose of the human person's very existence eventually becomes evident and so the oppressed will engage in the struggle to transform their context and work for their liberation as critically conscious beings.

Peter Roberts (2000) argues that conscientisation and praxis ought to be seen as necessarily intertwined rather than as separate concepts, which is often how they are treated. He states, "[c]onscientisation, I submit, is the reflexive dimension of praxis. Hence, when one engages in praxis, one is of necessity being conscientised. Conscientisation occurs in the transforming moment where critical reflection is synthesized with action" (Roberts 2000, 146). Critical consciousness, therefore, is understood as existing within praxis; that is, within the ongoing process of action and reflection within the context of everyday life. Therefore, critical consciousness is inextricably linked to historical consciousness (Torres 1993).

Conscientisation, within Freirean thinking, cannot be understood in individualistic terms. To do so would contradict Freire's ontological and epistemological foundations, which presuppose the inclusion of the 'other.' To become more fully human and to "know" is not done in isolation but rather each encounter occurs by attaining an appreciation of one's existence as existence among others. In practical terms this means that people come to recognise themselves as members of a group and this results in them recognising personal difficulties in their wider social context (Roberts 2000). Therefore, while individuals change via the process of conscientisation, this is never seen in isolation from the broader dynamic of social transformation. Freire believes that to state "I think" is only truly possible when

made alongside "we think" because the movement of the individual's consciousness fits within the broader movement of the collective consciousness. As such the process of conscientisation is an ongoing and critical process, as Roberts (2000, 152) explains, "[p]eople who undergo conscientisation are constantly being reconstituted, as they critically reflect on reality, act, change both themselves and the world around them, reflect again on the new reality which results from transformation, carry out further actions as necessary, and so on." Freire's theoretical concept of conscientisation presents useful knowledge for discussing how participants at Human Libraries raise their critical consciousness as they critically reflect on themselves, others, the world around them and the transformation of these. Raising critical consciousness, as a process of ongoing reflection and transformation, is at the heart of Freire's concept of Humanisation.

Humanisation

Humanisation is the central philosophical concept of Freire's (1996) critical pedagogy. He commences *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by announcing that humanisation has always been the central problem facing humanity and that now it is an "inescapable concern" (Freire 1996, 25). This is so for Freire because he is preoccupied with the essential nature of what it means to be a human being which he terms, humanisation. Writing in the context of university student protests, Freire considers the rebellion and remarks that the students "manifest in their essence this preoccupation with people as being in the world and with the world – preoccupation with *what* and *how* they are being" (Freire 1996, 25). Freire's reflection on the student rebellion suggests a desire to challenge society's distraction with "having" and encourage a more careful recognition and consideration of the importance of considering what it means to "be" (Irwin 2012). This concept resonates with the shift in worldview, inherent in Melucci's (1989, 177-178) conceptualisation of new social movements in which "[t]he freedom to have […] has been replaced by the freedom to be."

For Freire, humanisation indicates humanity's ontological vocation: the lifelong process of becoming more fully human. However, Freire asserts that the human vocation is forever unfolding because it "is thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity" (Freire 1996, 26). Therefore, humans never achieve the state of being fully human; we remain unfinished beings (McLaren and da Silva

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1993; Schaull 1996; Roberts 2011). For this reason Freire does not focus his attention on the attainment of a new liberated society because this can never materialise as a completed reality; rather, the focus of humanisation is humanity's encounter with life and history because in this encounter humans become more fully human.

The central question within the ongoing struggle of humanisation is:

> How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation? […] The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanisation .(Freire 1996, 30)

Freire's epistemology serves people as they confront experiences of dehumanisation and pursue their human vocation of becoming more fully human and liberating themselves from historical constraints. In doing so they engage in the human activity of transforming the world and thereby advancing toward the potential for a fuller and richer life as individuals and communities (Schaull 1996). Via the process of humanisation, humans address oppression, which is a social process because a human can never liberate himself or herself alone (Roberts 2011).

The collective quality of humanisation illustrates how humans relate to the world and also connects with social movements as collective action aimed at historical development. Freire suggests two "objects" of human relations: the world and other humans; "[t]o be human is to engage in relationship with others and with the world" (Freire 1973, 3). This ability to enter into relationships is what sets humans apart from animals because "[m]en, unlike animals, are not only *in* the world but *with* the world" (Freire 1973, 3). Human relationships with the world are conscious and critical. As such humans are capable of a variety of relationships which include the ability to choose, test, act, change and respond, as well as reflect, perceive and discover. As Peters and Lankshear (1994, 176) summarise it, "[h]uman beings consciously make the world and other people objects of their investigation, contemplation, action and comment. In doing so they communicate with others, transform the natural world, build relationships of various kinds with their fellows, and create, modify, and (sometimes) destroy institutions."

The human capacity to relate to the world in a critical way is how humans humanise themselves and this is at the heart of what Freire sees as being human and it also signifies that humanisation is not an individual pursuit and cannot occur in isolation (Shor and Freire 1987). Humanisation, therefore, occurs via communication and relationships and this results in the creation of a social world marked by fellowship and solidarity (Crotty 1998). Freire expresses it, "Our being is *a being with*" (Freire 1998b). Roberts (2000, 43) considers the importance of this "being with" and explains that Freire

> argues that it is only through intersubjectivity that individual existence makes sense. The existence of an "I" is only possible because of the concomitant existence of a "not I," where "not-I" implies both others and the world. For Freire, the "we exist" explains the "I exist": "I cannot be," he observes, "if you are not."

This recognition of relationship with the world and others defines what it means to be human and so it can equally indicate what occurs when one is dehumanized.

Humanisation is often disrupted by the actions (injustice, exploitation, oppression, violence) of other humans and this is a process of dehumanisation and is a "*distortion* of the vocation of becoming more fully human" (Freire 1996, 26). Therefore, just as humanisation is a process of human transformation by humans then dehumanisation must also occur because someone is involved in acts that dehumanize. Freire sees this interplay as a dialectical relationship. Irwin (2012) considers this to be one of Freire's most original contributions. The oppressor and the oppressed are engaged in a dialectical relationship of co-dependence rather than opposition. The relationship is such that it is not simply positive for the oppressor. Ultimately, within the relationship, the oppressor is dependent on the oppressed and this unmasks the falsity of oppression which is meant to offer the oppressor autonomous power. Similarly, because the oppressed are complicit with the oppressor in the oppression they are not simply innocent victims. This dynamic reveals that the process of oppression is not a unilateral phenomenon but, as the pedagogy of the oppressed reveals, it is complex and ambiguous (Irwin 2012). Freire (1996, 26) explains the significance of recognising this dialectical relationship between humanisation and dehumanisation:

> Because it is a distortion of being more fully human, sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so. In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain

their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both.

This dialectical relationship, which Freire (1996) also refers to as "humanizing interaction" highlights that the vocation of humanisation is a continual process and not a destination; it is praxis.

Praxis

An inherent element within humanisation is problem-posing. Problem-posing education teaches people to perceive their existence in the world more critically. It encourages people to cease regarding the world as a static reality and to recognise that it is in a process of transformation (Freire 1996). Problem-posing, as an important element in Freire's use of praxis, encourages people to break free of oppression, emerge from it and turn upon it. This occurs through praxis as reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.

For Freire, the unique ability to engage in praxis is humanity's distinguishing mark. Praxis is a synthesis of reflection and action and it results in political practices informed by reflection (Aronowitz 1993). In praxis, authentic action and reflection are indissolubly united. This unity creates authentic praxis which must involve action but not as mere activism, and it must also include reflection which does not become mere verbalism. As Freire (1996, 106-107) puts it, "revolution is achieved with neither verbalism nor activism, but rather with praxis, that is, with *reflection* and *action* directed at the structures to be transformed." Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed is not a pedagogy that is *for* the oppressed. If this were the case then it would not be a pedagogy that respected the freedom of the oppressed, rather it would only replicate the paternalism that is so often embedded in other pedagogies. The pedagogy *of* the oppressed, therefore, requires dialogue.

Dialogue

The pedagogy of the oppressed requires a process in which people engage in dialogue about their actions rather than a relationship which allows some people to explain the meaning of actions to other people (Freire 1996). Unless the pedagogy of the oppressed pursues a process of mutual dialogue then it becomes an objectification and it reduces the possibilities for everyone involved (Irwin 2012). Additionally, dialogue must not be understood as any

form of speaking. It cannot be thought of as "anything goes" or "idle conversation" (Roberts 2000, 15) or a "'free space' where you do what you want" (Shor and Freire 1987, 102). Dialogue, as employed by Freire, has a clear purpose, structure and direction and it takes place within a particular context. It also carries the goals of transformation and this requires "responsibility, defectiveness, determination, discipline, objectives" (Shor and Freire 1987, 102). The pedagogy of the oppressed, therefore, requires a process.

Freire (1996, 69) explains the role of dialogue in this process:

> Dialogue is the encounter between [people], mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming – between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them.

The process of naming the world on equal terms through dialogue is central to Freire's view of what it means to be human. If humans are ruled out of the process of naming, which requires dialogue, they are ruled out of becoming more fully human. Michael Peters and Colin Lankshear (1994, 179) illuminate the importance of this when they explain that this would mean that people would "be made by others, as objects, rather than for them as subjects to make themselves, and in making themselves to become, and thus to be, human." For this reason the process of becoming human must enable people the equal right to their voice which is the very point of Freire's concept of dialogue. Used as an everyday practice, 'dialogue' indicates the authentic communication of words or ideas between people who engage equally in conversation. Similarly, by understanding dialogue as a process of becoming human, Freire alerts us to the importance of people actively and equally engaging in a process of naming the world. In this way, dialogue is part of the process by which people make and remake reality through transforming action-reflection (Peters and Lankshear 1994). This process of naming the world through dialogue requires conditions that enable it to occur. Such conditions may be referred to using the term 'space.' Therefore, if people are to engage in dialogue as the exchange of words and ideas which enables equal, active participation in naming the world, then it is necessary to create contexts, or spaces, that enable this to occur. Freire's theoretical concept of dialogue, therefore, is useful in discussing how Human Libraries can open up social spaces in which people can think critically and engage in dialogue.

Conclusion

This research situates Human Library within the anti-prejudice movement. Human Books contribute to the anti-prejudice movement as they carry the movement's ideas of confronting prejudice and stereotypes and increasing respect for difference into their local communities. By engaging people in the confrontation of prejudice, social movements focus on a dimension of oppression that had been largely written out of stories of power and oppression by the powerful. This dynamic within people's everyday lives demonstrates how social movement struggles are at the heart of human rights and it illustrates its usefulness for appreciating this research into Human Library (Stammers 1995, 1999, 2009).

Freire's (1996) critical pedagogy also provides a means of appreciating the struggle between power and oppression and how people engage in this as a response to prejudice. It does this via four concepts. It promotes humans' consciousness of their own existence (conscientisation) which allows them to transform reality rather than merely adapt to it. In doing so they engage in the human vocation of becoming more fully human (humanisation): a goal that is never fully complete but continues as an ongoing act of construction. This unfolds through praxis that engages people in dialogue which is the relational interaction between reflection, naming of the world, action, and the return to reflection once more. Engaging in this continuous, purposefully motivated and open exchange provides participants the "space in which, together, to reflect, critique, affirm, challenge, act, and ultimately transform our collective understanding of the world" (Darder 2002, 82). While social movements and critical pedagogy offer ways of discussing the knowledge produced by this research project it still remains to explain how this knowledge was obtained. The next chapter provides this information.

Chapter 6: Methodology: How to Study a Human Library

This research asks: What does an examination of Human Library inform us about how people can challenge prejudice and increase respect for difference as a means for promoting humans' rights and freedoms? This chapter presents the key steps taken by this research to answer this question. It explains how the research gathers, organises and interprets its data. While there "is no typical, preferred method for carrying out research in the field of human rights" (Coomans, Grunfeld, and Kamminga 2009, 15), choosing reliable methods and a robust methodology is necessary for producing substantive research results.

The research process includes four research methods used over three broad phases. This process structured the method of data collection. It commenced with a period of familiarisation with the Human Library Organisation and its method of dialogue which was achieved by studying the various Organisers' guides and content provided on the Human Library Organisation and Human Library Australia websites. Fieldwork was undertaken at two Human Libraries in Lismore and Launceston. This included acting as a participant-observer by volunteering as a librarian at Launceston and participating as a Reader at Launceston and Lismore. In conjunction with this fieldwork, semi-structured in-depth interviews were completed with participants from Launceston and Lismore. Finally, the role of participant-observer was enhanced by organising and running the Willagee Human Library in Perth. Interviews were also conducted with participants from this Human Library. Overall, 44 interviews were completed (Appendix 2). This chapter explains these elements in greater detail via the research projects' three phases: reconnaissance; contact, connections and observation; and the Willagee Human Library project. The fieldwork is explained in phases two and three and the interviews are explained in a separate section. Finally, the research employs constructivist grounded theory, as practised by Charmaz (2006, 2011, 2014), as its methodology. This is explained in the section dealing with interviews.

This research project gained ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Curtin University. Central to this approval was ensuring informed consent by participants. This was obtained via a consent form for participants who made themselves available for interviews (Appendix 3). In addition to this a written explanation of what it means to participate at a Human Library was available to participants (Appendix 4). Each participant

who completed the interview consent form (Appendix 3) was asked to provide his or her preferred name for use in the research project. Each participant was given the option of providing a pseudonym but no one took that option. The list of interview participant names (Appendix 2) and the names used throughout this thesis are, therefore, the names which each of the participants stipulated they wished to be used in this thesis.

These methodological choices have been necessary to satisfy the nature of the research project, particularly its focus on people making a grassroots response to prejudice to contribute to the enjoyment of human rights. The use of semi-structured in-depth interviews allows for the voices of the participants to be heard and constructivist grounded theory supports their interpretation of their perceptions of Human Libraries and enables the rendering of concepts from the interpretive process. Furthermore, participant-observation supports the grassroots approach of this research and encourages its inductive method of qualitative research. These matters will be dealt with in more depth throughout this chapter.

Phase One: Reconnaissance

The research process began by gaining fundamental knowledge of Human Library. Operating since 2000 (Denmark) and 2006 (Lismore), Human Library has an established history and possesses a body of information both internationally and in Australia. This exists in numerous formats: training and organisation manuals, evaluations by participants (Human Books, Readers, Organisers), evaluation reports of local Human Libraries, newspaper articles, radio interviews and television reports. The intention of this phase, to gain knowledge of Human Library, directed the selection of the sources in this phase. Due to the general nature of the knowledge required by this initial phase, it was decided to begin at the macro-level and use materials provided by the Human Library Organisation and Human Library Australia rather than materials produced by local Human Libraries for their specific contexts. The sources selected were training and organisation manuals (Abergel et al. 2005; Human Libraries Australia 2010b) and official websites (Human Library 2012e; Human Libraries Australia 2010c). Chapter 2 presented the results of this reconnaissance phase which provides knowledge of Human Library and made it possible to start making connections with Human Libraries and their practitioners.

Phase Two: Connections, Participants and Observation

Fundamental knowledge of Human Library was gained via the Organiser's Guide (Abergel et al. 2005), Resources Kit (Human Libraries Australia 2010b) and information presented on Human Library websites (Human Library 2012e; Human Libraries Australia 2010c). To build on this knowledge, and to add depth and nuance, it was essential to go beyond these primary sources and engage with the humans involved in Human Library. The second phase of research, therefore, encompasses the processes of making connections, recruiting participants and establishing my role as a participant-observer.

Connections with key members of Human Library were made in several steps. The initial step was making contact with three persons, each having played a significant role in Human Library's development in Denmark and Australia: Ronni Abergel, Sabina Baltruweit and Shauna McIntyre. These three individuals are examples of gatekeepers because they are people who are engaged in a social movement organisation who possess practical knowledge and activist wisdom (Maddison and Scalmer 2006). As gatekeepers they carry a wealth of knowledge and experience of Human Library and they provide unique insights, critical reflection and act as intermediaries between the researcher and Human Libraries (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey 2011; David and Sutton 2004).

Contact with Abergel occurred via written correspondence, while contact with Baltruweit and McIntyre occurred via informal meetings and conversations as well as formal interviews and some correspondence. Abergel remains involved with the Human Library Organisation as its international director but Baltruweit and McIntyre no longer have any close involvement with Human Library. These connections enabled me to connect with active members of Human Library.

The next step in establishing connections required me to make contact with other Human Libraries, their Organisers and participants throughout Australia. Several actions facilitated this. I joined the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) Human Library e-list, which is an information-sharing network for those who are involved with Human Library. This, along with my own search for Human Libraries, put me in touch with Human Libraries and their Organisers around Australia and overseas. As a result, I gained contact

with the following Human Libraries in Australia: Lismore, Wollongong, Auburn, Canterbury, Redland Bay, Melville, Cockburn and the West Australia Health Department.

These connections added to my knowledge of Human Library and allowed me to experience Human Libraries in a variety of locations throughout Australia. This allowed me to gain an appreciation of how the original work of Baltruweit and McIntyre, in Lismore, had been translated across Australia in other Human Libraries. It was now necessary to make choices and focus my attention for the ensuing research phases.

Casting the net wider helped me discover additional gatekeepers for the research project, especially regarding participant recruitment. Several individuals deserve mention: Lucy Kinsley (Librarian, Lismore Human Library), Marcia Coelho (Melville Human Library) and Nathalie Servant (Launceston Human Library). Kinsley, Coelho and Servant provided two essential elements traditionally offered by gatekeepers: valuable information about their Human Libraries and their participants and they became advocates for the research project, facilitating the involvement of Human Library participants in the study (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey 2011).

Kinsley gave me access to Lismore Human Library and recruited participants for interviews. Coelho introduced me to her colleagues at the City of Melville Council and this became an important way of finding a location for my Human Library project. Servant invited me to participate in the Launceston Human Library event during Launceston's *Festivale*. Servant also introduced me to her organising committee which enabled me to recruit more interview participants. The personal connections I made with each of these women were essential in advancing the research. More will be said about participant recruitment below when we discuss the research's interview method. At this point, however, we consider my role as a participant-observer.

My connections meant that I had found Human Libraries and Organisers that put me in contact with attempts to bring to life the Human Library method and its aims. Contact with these Human Libraries provided me with opportunities to observe how the original Human Library founders' aim was being pursued in Australia. These Human Libraries offered me

opportunities to act as a participant-observer and prepare myself for the role as a Human Library Organiser of my own Human Library in Western Australia. As a Human Library apprentice, I was also seeking a mentor.

One of the most valuable outcomes of the contact phase was my connection and involvement with Launceston Human Library and its instigator, Servant. This connection facilitated the first period of fieldwork which employed mixed qualitative research methods: participant-observer, field diary and interviews (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey 2011). Here, we consider the research methods of participant-observer and field notes; interviews will be dealt with later.

I had prepared myself for fieldwork by gaining knowledge of Human Library and I had established connections with key gatekeepers in several Human Libraries. Fieldwork with Launceston Human Library, as a participant-observer, allowed me to engage in a Human Library and become directly involved with its participants as I learned the necessary organisational skills and observed, and cooperated with, its members in a way that would let me watch, listen and collect data from an insider's perspective. As a participant-observer I intended to gain greater knowledge of participants and their actions in the context of a Human Library to compliment my other methods of data collection, particularly interviews (Neuman 2006; Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey 2011; Habibis 2010). This proved useful for comparing my perceptions with the perceptions offered by participants during interviews. My observation also allowed me to study how participants at Human Libraries interacted and engaged with each other during readings. During the discussion chapters I intentionally favour the perceptions and voices of the participants and only occasionally introduce my perceptions. This decision has been made to remain faithful to the research project's focus on ordinary people and their experience of grassroots anti-prejudice action. I have been conscious not to make this research strongly autoethnographic by inserting my perceptions in a manner that drowns the voices of the other participants. When I do provide my perceptions during the discussion of participants' perceptions it is done to add knowledge. For example, at times I experienced similar reactions as those expressed by the participants, such as empathy, anxiety, reticence, and adding my perceptions to those of the participants adds nuance and depth or clarification to their interpretation of what they encountered.

Servant invited me to visit Launceston Human Library and take part in one of its annual events which occurs during *Festivale*, Launceston's annual food and wine festival. *Festivale* runs for three days from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon and it showcases the regions beers, wines and food along with music and street performance. Launceston Human Library ran on the Sunday (10 February, 2013) from 10am until 2pm. This context afforded me the opportunity to see how passers-by reacted to the Human Library and how this choice of location and setting influenced the way people interacted with the Human Library. This helped me appreciate the role that location plays in running a Human Library and to compare the different approaches employed by Launceston and Lismore. This knowledge informed my choice of location and setting when I organised my Human Library.

Prior to the Human Library at *Festivale*, I met with Servant and two members of the Launceston Human Library organising committee. This allowed me to establish connections with two new contacts who introduced me to more participants in Launceston Human Library and I joined them as a temporary member of the organising team at the *Festivale* Human Library. This allowed me to immerse myself as a participant-observer.

On the morning of the Human Library I helped set up the library space and then during the day I acted as a librarian, greeting Readers as they approached the Human Library and introducing them to the method and what it meant to "borrow" a Human Book for a "reading." I booked Readers into their 30-minute reading slots and introduced Readers to their chosen Human Books before they engaged in their reading. Throughout the day I also read three Human Books. As a team member I gained access to the Organisers throughout the day which allowed for informal conversations about Human Library. This also occurred with Readers and festival visitors who were passing-by.

I achieved three outcomes as a participant-observer at Launceston. Firstly, I added to the knowledge I gathered via interviews because I was able to observe and compare my observations with participant perceptions shared during interviews. Secondly, my involvement at Launceston Human Library added to the knowledge I gained through texts of how to organise and run a Human Library. Thirdly, I observed how participants took part in the Human Library and how Human Books and Readers behaved. I did not listen to their conversations but, from a distance, I observed how they greeted each other, their body

language and gestures and if I perceived any changes at the end of their readings compared to how they had commenced them. My intention was to use my observation to "view what people actually do, so you learn about how people really behave and also how certain behaviours are influenced by the situation or context in which they are conducted" (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey 2011, 173).

Throughout the entire research process, I maintained a field journal. A field journal is different to field notes because it allows the researcher to record thoughts and interpretations about what is observed, while notes record what is actually observed. A field journal, therefore, includes "hunches, ideas, feelings, personal opinions and sometimes feelings of disgust and shock" (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey 2011, 197). Maintaining this journal was a way of incorporating reflexivity throughout the research process, which is an important requirement for constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2011). As this research deals with prejudice and stereotypes, it is essential that I engage in processes of critical reflection regarding my own experience and expression of prejudice and stereotypes. My own subjective insights and feelings form part of the research's experiential data. In this way my field journal contributes to the research data and acts as a tool for critical reflection and observation within the iterative process of this qualitative research project (Neuman 2006).

Phase Three: The Human Library Project

The previous two phases provided knowledge of Human Library via reconnaissance and the role of participant-observer. Even as a participant-observer at the Launceston Human Library, my research remained on the margins of Human Library because I was not a fully involved member of the Launceston Human Library team. While my five-day visit to Launceston helped me develop a good rapport with the Human Library organising team and allowed me to function for one day as one of its members, I had not been involved throughout the entire process that is required to know what it means to organise and run a Human Library. To further examine the research question it was necessary to immerse myself in Human Library as a participant-observer and organise and run a Human Library from beginning to end. As a result, this research project shares some similarities in methodology with the study by Kudo et al. (2011) which organised and ran Dokkyo Human Library during a university festival in October 2010. Like the study by Kudo et al. (2011) this research it is able to draw on the experiences of the researcher, as well as participants, in

analysing the perceptions of the Human Library's participants. I organised and ran the Willagee Human Library. This made it possible to gather evidence within the context of an active Human Library and gain additional data for analysis. The following relates the process I followed in organising and running Willagee Human Library.

Establishing Contacts

During the second phase of my research I made contact with Marcia Coelho, who had organised and run a Human Library in the City of Melville in 2007.[8] By the time I had met Coelho, Human Library had ceased operating in Melville but she still believed the method had much to offer local communities. When I approached her in the early days of my research, as I tried to add depth to my understanding of how Human Libraries operate within local communities, Coelho offered to support my research. As a gatekeeper in Human Library and Melville, she put me in touch with former Human Books, who had taken part in her Human Library, and she connected me with members of Melville Council: Elizabeth Warnock (Melville Community Development Officer) and Jenny Bawden (Willagee Library). Elizabeth, Jenny and I had several meetings to discuss the possibilities for recommencing Human Library in Melville and they expressed the desire to run a pilot project in the suburb of Willagee with the possibility of running further Human Libraries at other locations in the City of Melville.

The City of Melville was running a number of events as part of Harmony Week and it was decided that one of these events, the Willagee Harmony Festival, provided an opportune occasion for our Human Library pilot project (The City of Melville 2013). This festival was organised for Saturday 16 March from 11am to 1pm and would include several cultural stalls as well as performances, a barbeque and information stalls. My fieldwork in Launceston convinced me that a festival setting was one of the better options as a setting for a Human Library. I believed that a festival setting would ensure a good number and mix of potential Readers and the outdoor space had the potential to establish a relaxed atmosphere in the midst of the other festival activities. As a result, the decision to run the Willagee Human Library became a reality.

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[8] More information on the City of Melville's Living Library is provided in its evaluation report (*The Living Library: Don't Judge a Book by its Cover* 2007).

Participant Recruitment and Training

One of the most important, if not the most important, elements in a Human Library is its Human Books. For about a year leading up to the Willagee Human Library event I had been trying to recruit suitable volunteers to be Human Books. Coelho had provided me with the contact details of her previous Human Books but none of them were able to volunteer for the Willagee Human Library. I, therefore, began contacting various groups and organisations throughout Perth that represent individuals who experience various forms of prejudice and discrimination. Although I approached about 35 groups via emails and phone calls, only two positive contacts were made.

The most fruitful means of finding suitable Human Books was snowballing which is recruitment using personal contacts and word of mouth. Snowballing proved to be the most beneficial method of recruitment because it enabled me to find suitable participants who had the very specific characteristics that the role of Human Book requires and this can really only be judged using knowledge obtained through personal contact (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey 2011).

My fieldwork had taught me that training Human Books was absolutely essential if the Human Library method was to achieve its aims. As part of my training process I interviewed each person who expressed interest in volunteering as a Human Book. This made it possible for me to explain Human Library to each interested person, to outline the qualities that Human Books require and to explain the necessary skills. It also provided each potential volunteer the chance to ask questions and clarify their understanding of Human Library and what was expected of them as a Human Book. Each interview allowed me the chance to have a conversation with the interested volunteer which was somewhat like the conversations they would have with Readers. The interviews were, therefore, a way for each of us to explore how the volunteer would cope with a reading. By the end of the process, I had recruited seven volunteers whom I believed were suitable to be trained to take on the role of Human Book. In line with ethics requirements, each volunteer was provided with an information sheet that explained Human Library and the role of Human Books (Appendix 4). Those Human Books who chose to involve themselves in the interview process completed a consent form prior to their interviews (Appendix 3). Each of these volunteers took part in a training evening, which I organised and ran. Six volunteers attended this evening and an

additional volunteer, who was found after the training evening, was provided individual training.

The training session lasted three hours and was held at Willagee Library on Tuesday 12 March and covered the following matters:

1. Welcome

2. Individual Introductions by Human Book Volunteers

3. Introduction to Human Library: History and Method

4. Volunteering: Why did you volunteer?

5. Explaining what a Human Book does and how to do it.

6. Creating your Human Book Title and Catalogue Description

7. Communication Skills and Tips

8. How to Work with Readers

9. Practice: Being a Human Book

10. Practical Matters for the Willagee Human Library Event

Out of the seven volunteers who completed their training, five volunteers committed to be Human Books at the Willagee Human Library event on 16 March. Two volunteers decided not to take part in the Willagee event for personal reasons but expressed that they wanted to be involved in future Human Library events.

Keeping to the Human Library guidelines, each person who volunteers as a Human Book creates his or her own title and description. This process is essential because it recognises that the person who volunteers as a Human Book names himself or herself and then fashions his or her own description. This highlights Human Library's aim to counter prejudice and stereotypes. By fashioning their own title and description Human Books avoid the experience of being labelled or described by other persons. The following table provides the details of the Willagee Human Library's five Human Books:

Volunteer	Title	Description
Amy	Guess Who??	Do you remember that game from growing up, where you guess who the opponent is by the way they look? Well I feel like a living version of the game!
		People always take a look at me and sum me up based on my age, my hair colour, skin colour/quality, my makeup/clothing, my piercings/jewellery, my chest, my body shape/weight and everything other than who I really am! Before I've even spoken people think they know me, where I'm from, what I do, how smart or wealthy I am, even if I'm nice or scary?!
		But life is not a game, and I have feelings and depth that you may never know about.... unless you ask! Please don't overlook me, come and ask me about who I really am, the answers are likely to surprise you!
Maxine	Happily Queer	Happy to discuss any questions you may have about what it means to be Homosexual.
Pari	Trip to an Island without a Bridge	Arriving in Australia and reaching my first home as a married woman. A plane trip with the Royal Flying Doctor. The Australian BBQ.
Ruth	Juggling Life – Making ends meet	A world full of activities with limited time on my hands, I juggle with life's journey and daily work and self-engagement. Coping with the various activities in my life, I have often learned to draw from my inner strength and spirituality as well as reflecting on my resilience that is packed with determination, hard work and perseverance to make ends meet.
Roz	Overcoming Adversity	An insight into acquired brain injury and how I deal with the new life, new me, that I have had to lead for the last 24 years!

Table 1: Human Book Titles and Descriptions from Willagee Human Library

The Willagee Human Library

The Willagee Human Library ran from 11.00am until 1.00pm. As noted above, it was part of the Willagee Harmony Festival and so was one of a variety of activities present during the festival. This festival took place in a small park outside the local library. We had a marquee where we provided a booking desk and a catalogue of the titles and descriptions of our Human Books. Interested festival visitors approached the marquee and read the titles and descriptions. In my role as Human Library Organiser, I acted as a librarian along with Bawden. As part of these roles, I walked around the festival and invited visitors to come to the Human Library as well as explaining it to them and suggesting they may like to come and book a reading.

The following table presents the booking activity for each Human Book on the day. Each reading is assigned thirty minutes. If a Human Book does not have another Reader waiting at the end of a reading then it is possible to extend the reading time if both the Human Book and Reader agree.

	Guess Who??	Happily Queer	Juggling Life – Making ends meet	Overcoming Adversity	Trip to an Island without a Bridge
11.00am					
11.30am	Lynda	Gerry	Anna	Cornelia (with her two children)	Catie
12.00pm	Sherri	Cornelia (with her two children)		Denise and Alex (with their five disability companions)	
12.30pm	Joyce			Regina (with her two daughters)	Lindsey
1.00pm				Catie	

Table 2: Reading Bookings, Willagee Human Library

While the booking sheet suggests that the Human Library began operating at 11am, this was not the case. It did not properly start welcoming Readers until about 11.30am because the Harmony Festival began with a Welcome to Country at 11.00am. Therefore, the 20 reading sessions were reduced to fifteen sessions and out of those twelve sessions were filled by a total of 20 Readers. Catie appears in a reading with Roz after the Human Library had ceased to operate because they engaged in a reading by chance. While it is usual for a reading to consist of the Human Book and a Reader it is sometimes possible for a Human Book to agree to a reading with several Readers. This was the case in three readings because a two mothers each asked if their two children could read two Human Books and two carers who had brought a group of five clients with disabilities to the Harmony Festival asked if they could read one of the Human Books as a group.

Interviews

The use of constructivist grounded theory as the research's methodology qualifies semi-structured, in-depth interviews as an appropriate method to acquire suitable data for qualitative analysis aimed at achieving a thematic understanding of the topic of this study. Interviews add to the knowledge gathered by participant-observation which involves informal interviewing during fieldwork (Fontana and Frey 2005). Semi-structured, in-depth interviews allow the researcher to enter into conversations with participants who relate their experiences at Human Libraries and provide knowledge about their experiences as well as entering into a process of reflection that allows them to make meaning of their experiences. Steiner Kvale (1996, 5) explains that "[t]hrough conversations people come to know one another, and the worlds they inhabit, better because conversation helps people learn through sharing their experiences, feelings and hopes." Interviews contribute to this research because they gather participant perceptions of Human Libraries which can be examined as a means of appreciating how Human Libraries increase respect for difference and human rights. The following explains how interviews have been employed by this research and is guided by Kvale's linear approach to in-depth interviewing. Four interview elements are presented: thematising, designing, interviewing and transcribing.[9]

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[9] The seven stages of an interview investigation are listed and briefly outlined by Kvale (1996, 88). Suggested literature regarding qualitative research relating to the seven stages is also provided (Kvale 1996, 90-91).

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Methodology and Thematising

This research is situated within the interpretive tradition (Crotty 1998) and employs constructivist grounded theory as its methodology for focusing on its phenomena, analysing data and producing concepts for the development of theory. It follows an approach to constructivist grounded theory that is practised by Charmaz (2006, 9), who "provides *a* way of doing grounded theory" and views "grounded theory methods as a set of principles and practices, not as prescriptions and packages." This approach to constructivist grounded theory matches the epistemological framework of this research and provides it with a suitable "way to learn about the worlds we study and a method for developing theories to understand them" (Charmaz 2006, 10).

Grounded theory first appeared via the collaborative research of Glaser and Strauss (1967) in the 1960s. In *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* they set forth their strategies for "the discovery of theory from data" (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 1). It offered qualitative researchers an approach to research other than deductive research strategies that analysed hypotheses using existing theories. Glaser and Strauss proposed grounded theory as a research approach providing a systematic qualitative analysis for logically generating theoretical understanding of social realities. Charmaz (2006, 6) summarises their contribution succinctly as moving "qualitative research beyond descriptive studies into the realm of explanatory theoretical frameworks, thereby providing abstract, conceptual understandings of the studied phenomena."

Since its introduction in the 1960s grounded theory has developed under various influences. It expanded beyond its origins in sociology and was adopted for use in psychology, anthropology, education, social work and nursing. In addition to this grounded theory has been used in conjunction with other methodologies. Grounded theory is an adaptable methodology because its aim of carefully inducing theory from data by remaining faithful to everyday realities of its area of study demands adaptability. Strauss and Corbin (1994), who provided a qualitative emphasis to grounded theory, explain the methodology's adaptability as remaining open to changing conditions in a way that allows for alternative modes of analysis and conceptualisation. Such openness allows researchers to seek knowledge in the phenomena under study within their particular place and time to develop further conceptualisation. Charmaz (2006, 2011, 2014), engaging the adaptability of grounded

theory, has made her own significant contributions, among which is a constructivist approach to the methodology.

Charmaz, favouring Strauss and Corbin (1994), departs from Glaser and Strauss (1967), whose original work referred to discovering theory as emerging from data separate from the scientific observer. Charmaz (2014, 17) argues that because researchers are part of the world they study, data and theories are not discovered but are constructed:

> My approach explicitly assumes that any theoretical rendering offers an *interpretive* portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it. Research participants' implicit meanings, experiential views - and researchers' finished grounded theories – are constructions of reality. In keeping with its Chicago school antecedents, I argue for building on the pragmatist underpinnings in grounded theory and advancing interpretive analyses that acknowledge these constructions.

This research embraces the same assumptions regarding its interpretation of its studied world and the production of theoretical concepts. It views its studied phenomena from the inside and engages in a process in which researcher and participants co-construct data and interpret their perceptions via their interactions (Charmaz 2011).

This process of co-construction requires a method. Methods bring phenomena into focus and enable researchers to broaden and deepen knowledge. Methods are researchers' means of trying to "see this world as our research participants do – from the inside" (Charmaz 2006, 14). Charmaz (2014, 26) employs the following metaphor, which aptly expresses the role of method within constructivist grounded theory, "[s]imilar to a camera with many lenses, first you view a broad sweep of the landscape. Subsequently, you change your lens several times and shorten your focal points to bring key scenes closer and closer into view." This research achieves these broad sweeps and closer focusing by following Charmaz's system of coding, memo writing, sorting memos, categorising and theorising.[10]

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[10] For a thorough explanation and examples of the constructivist grounded theory methods used by this research see Charmaz (2006, 2011, 2014).

Following Charmaz's practice of constructivist grounded theory this research commenced with a process of coding, aimed at understanding the participants' perceptions expressed in their interviews. The first phase of coding focused on interview transcripts line-by-line. Gerunds were used to code for actions with the aim of making individual actions visible and tangible. Using gerunds assists in linking codes. Examples of coding from one interview are: feeling comfortable in my own skin; being confident about confronting prejudice; putting myself out there. The value of coding is that it does not need to be complex and it allows the researcher a way of comparing data and identifying tentative categories. It is important to acknowledge that codes, rather than capturing the empirical reality, are the views of the researcher who chooses the words that constitute the codes. Charmaz (2006, 51) explains the value of coding and suggests its corrective value:

> Your research participants' actions and statements teach you about their worlds, albeit sometimes in ways they may not anticipate. Studying your data through line-by-line coding sparks new ideas for you to pursue. Hence, the grounded theory method itself contains correctives that reduce the likelihood that researchers merely superimpose their preconceived notions on the data. Line-by-line coding provides an early corrective of this type.

The second phase of coding is a process of sorting, synthesizing, integrating and organising codes into categories. This is an emergent process that allows the researcher to act upon the data and develop threads for analysis. In this process I considered how codes expressed similar things or matched in some way. Therefore, when I considered the three codes provided above I began to recognise the category: challenging prejudice as an activist. Categories are developed using codes to sort large batches of data while preserving empirical detail and moving the research forward to construct new understanding.

Categories are used to move the research toward the construction of concepts. The research uses these to proceed to construct a coherent analysis and construction of its study. Categories are selected and raised to the level of concepts because they offer "theoretical reach, incisiveness, generic power, and relation to other categories" (2006, 139). This process requires subjecting the selected categories to greater analysis and refinement to demonstrate how they form relationships to other concepts. An example of this in this research project is raising the category, named above, of challenging prejudice as an activist,

to fit within the concept of enabling human rights activism. Concepts, like this, become the interpretive frames to discuss abstract understandings within the study. Using concepts shapes the analytic process of the research and allows it to explain, organise and discuss the meaning of the data.

The process of attending to the data and constructing codes, categories and concepts has been achieved by ongoing memo-writing. The style of memo-writing in each constructivist grounded theory project is developed according to the needs and choices of the researcher. I used memo-writing to name codes and raise them to conceptual categories in order to construct concepts. This included the development of conceptual definitions and ongoing analysis via a narrative format. I also incorporated my own observations and reflections which were shaped by my journal entries.

Designing

Interviews occurred over a lengthy period of time but generally fell within three periods. The first set of interviews took place in Lismore on 24 and 25 July 2012. These interviews gathered data for analysis; increased my understanding of Human Library; developed my interviewing skills; and resulted in alterations to the interview guides (Appendices 5 and 6). The second set of interviews took place during fieldwork in Launceston. Some of these interviews took place around the time of *Festivale* (7 to 11 February 2013) and other interviews were completed via telephone after I had returned to Perth (20 February to 21 March 2013). The interviews that I conducted in Perth were with participants who had attended the Launceston Human Library at *Festivale* as Readers. These interviews were conducted by phone because time constraints did not allow me to remain in Launceston to complete the interviews and some of the participants had visited *Festivale* from other states in Australia. The final set of interviews was with participants involved with Willagee Human Library and took place between 19 March and 4 April 2013. Each interview in each of the three periods took place in a location and at a time that was chosen by the interviewee. Generally, interviewees invited me to their homes but some chose other locations such as cafés and libraries.

The 44 interviewees (Appendix 2) represent a variety of experiences and perspectives of Human Library. The participants come from three distinct Human Libraries each located in

its own context: Lismore, Launceston and Willagee (Perth). Each participant represents a different experience of Human Library: Human Books, Readers and Organisers. In addition, some participants have been involved with Human Library from its commencement in Lismore in 2006, while others have only just begun their association with Human Library as part of the Willagee Human Library and have only experienced one Human Library event. Including this variety of experiences in the interview process aims to gain knowledge of Human Library that reflects the reality that there is more than one type of experience of Human Library.

A feature of the interview cohort in this research that does not appear in the existing research about Human Library is that the interviews have been conducted with Human Books and then with some of their Readers. In addition to this, as a participant-observer who has acted as a Reader, the researcher has been able to interview Readers who have read the same Human Books that he has read. Interviewing Human Books and their Readers and reading the same Human Books as other Readers brings nuance and depth to the interviewing process and to the data it gathers. It produces data that is useful for comparing and contrasting the perceptions offered by Human Books and their Readers of the same readings. This responds to the knowledge gap indicated by other researchers who assert that Human Libraries are difficult to evaluate (Kinsley 2009; Rendall 2009). Interviewing Human Books and those who have read them enables the research to examine people's perceptions of the same reading and to appreciate the extent to which their perceptions match and differ in meaning.

Interviewees were selected using convenience sampling (Schwandt 2007; Henry 2009). The sample is, therefore, not representative of the population of Human Books, Readers or the local community. Interviewees were invited to indicate their willingness to participate in research interviews when they booked their reading at Human Libraries. If they were willing they provided their contact details on a signed consent form (Appendix 3). Interviewees were also sourced via snowballing during visits to Lismore. Therefore, the 44 interviewees entered the process as a result of their own willingness.

At the beginning of each interview I confirmed the participant's informed consent (Kvale 1996). I explained the research project and its aims to the participant. This included

providing the participant with a written statement of the project's question, aims and its intentions for the use of the interview data (Appendix 3). Each participant was made aware that the interview would be digitally recorded and then transcribed. At the end of this briefing I asked for confirmation that the participant understood the information provided and that the participant also agreed to the use of the interview data for publication. Each participant was asked to provide permission for the use of his or her name or a pseudonym and every participant chose to give permission for the use of his or her name in the research project. Participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the research project at any time without prejudice. Consent was given by signing a consent form which included all of the information just related. In every case, each participant not only gave consent, but did so enthusiastically.

Interviewing

The in-depth, semi-structured interviews in this research gather qualitative descriptions of the participants' perceptions of their experiences at Human Libraries for the purpose of interpretation. This method seeks knowledge that evolves through dialogue (Kvale 1996). As this knowledge surfaces out of a process of dialogue it is a collaborative effort that results in "a contextually bound and mutually created story" (Fontana and Frey 2005, 696). This raises questions regarding the nature of the knowledge, specifically in relation to neutrality. Rather than regarding this as a problem, Fontana and Frey (2005) refer to this as the new empathetic interview. Here, the interviewer takes an ethical stance that supports the position of the group or individual that is the subject of research. The interviewer adopts the role of advocate and partner in the hope that the study results may contribute to advocating for social outcomes that challenge and alleviate the predicament of the interviewee. It, therefore, is naturally suited to the study of oppressed and marginalised groups (Fontana and Frey 2005). My participation in this research project has drawn me into such a position. Firstly, my bias favours the use of one-on-one dialogues as a means of countering prejudice and advancing the human rights of people who are oppressed and members of underdeveloped and marginalised groups. Secondly, my involvement with Human Library has led me to accept a voluntary position as the Human Library contact person in Australia and, as such, I act as an advocate for Human Library. I am both an empathetic interviewer and an empathetic participant-observer.

The research's in-depth, semi-structured interviews employed a guide approach because it provides specified themes which offer options within a flexible interview format that can be adapted to suit each interview context (Johnson and Turner 2003). Two interview guides (Appendices 5 and 6) shaped the sequence of topics for each interview and each guide reflected the nature of the role that the participant had with Human Library. When interviewing Organisers, appropriate questions were drawn from each of these guides and the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for additional questions specifically dealing with organisational issues. The main difference in each interview guide concerned the different experience that the participant had of Human Library as a result of his or her particular role although each guide included many of the same themes. For example, each participant was asked to describe his or her motivation for being involved with Human Library but the question was phrased according to whether the participant was a Human Book, a Reader or an Organiser.

The questions of each interview guide followed a similar sequence. The questions were mostly framed as open questions that encouraged "normal conversation [with] a specific purpose and structure" (Kvale 1996, 131) which was to engage the participant in sharing information that provided opportunities for reflection and the development of meaning. A small number of interviews lasted less than 30 minutes and the remainder of the interviews were almost equally divided into either about 50 minutes or 30 minutes. During each interview I listened carefully to the responses and asked follow-up and prompt questions to encourage the participants to keep talking. This approach encouraged a conversational interview.

With each new interview I learnt new and valuable skills. I came to realise the value of letting a participant speak without interruption and that even when it might seem as though the participant has said everything it is worth continuing with the interview because this often resulted in the participant sharing something unexpected. Likewise, allowing periods of silence gives the participant time to reflect and consider an answer more deeply and valuable insights emerge. I also found that inviting the participants to share anecdotes and narratives from their experiences helped explore the meaning that each participant made of his or her own Human Library experience and illustrated their experiences more richly. Further questions would arise out of these anecdotes and narratives.

I agree with Kvale's (1996, 128) observation that "a common experience after research interviews is that the subjects have experienced the interview as genuinely enriching, have enjoyed talking freely with an attentive listener, and have sometimes obtained new insights into important themes of their lived world." I found that the interview process enabled the participant to discover new insights and to deepen their understanding of their Human Library experience. For example, participants commented that it was only at a certain point in the interview that they had become aware of something they had learnt or discovered as a result of their reading at a Human Library.

The themes included in each interview were introduced using a variety of question styles (Travers 2010; Kvale 1996). The opening questions looked for descriptive responses relating to such themes as: motivation for involvement; Human Book title and catalogue entry; and beliefs or attitudes regarding chosen Human Books. The next set of questions required participants to express values, opinions and feelings (these questions were often probing or follow-up questions to descriptive questions) and asked about: the participant's reading experience; awareness of personal prejudices and stereotypes; recognition of understanding as a result of the Human Library experience; and the Human Library's impact on daily life and relationships. The final set of questions included summary questions and asked participants to share their perceptions about Human Libraries' ability to counter prejudice and contribute to human rights. The final question gave the participant the opportunity to add any further comments or observations regarding their experience at a Human Library.

Transcribing

Each interview was digitally recorded and then saved in a secure file. After serious consideration regarding my own time and competence, I decided to employ the services of a transcription company to convert the interviews from their audio format into written text. I provided the company with clear and precise instructions, including a transcription key (Appendix 7), for the production of verbatim transcriptions that avoided any interpretation of the audio recordings of the interviews (Wray et al. 1998). This style was applied to the transcribing of each interview. Once I received the completed transcripts I revised them to remove errors. The primary source of interview data for analysis remains the audio recordings and not the transcripts. As Kvale (1996, 165) explains, this is because "[t]ranscripts are not copies or representations of some original reality, they are interpretive

constructions that are useful tools for given purposes." With this in mind, the written transcripts were used in conjunction with the audio files during analysis via constructivist grounded theory. An example page of the transcript style (Appendix 8) illustrates the difference in presentation styles of the interviews in transcript form and how they are presented in the discussion chapters. Some symbols have been removed from the transcripts when they are used in the discussion chapters because they impede the meaning of the participant's comments. For example the transcript uses the symbol [/] to indicate a pause and length of pause [//////]. A comma [,] replaces this symbol to assist the reading of the text. In some excerpts commas have been removed because it impedes the flow and meaning of the participants' comments. However, apart from commas no other punctuation appears throughout participant quotations so as not to manipulate the voice and meaning of the participants.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented how this research project gathered, organised and interpreted data to investigate the question: What does an examination of Human Library inform us about how people can challenge prejudice and increase respect for difference as a means for promoting humans' rights and freedoms? Its method of investigation involved four research methods embedded in three phases. It commenced with reconnaissance aimed at gathering knowledge about Human Library, the results of which are evident in Chapter 2 as well as this chapter. The knowledge gathering occurred by engaging with sources such as websites and other texts, such as manuals and resource kits, and helped establish contacts and connections that were necessary for continuing to gather knowledge about Human Library and to plan observational experiences of Human Libraries. Establishing connections with Human Library gatekeepers made it possible to learn from their practical knowledge and activist wisdom and to engage in fieldwork in Lismore, Launceston and Willagee (Perth) and adopt the role of participant-observer. This role added to the knowledge base of the research and enabled me as a researcher to develop the necessary skills for organising and running a Human Library. It also afforded me the means of comparing different approaches to running Human Libraries as well as observing the behaviour of participants at Human Libraries. Finally, engaging in this research as a participant-observer enabled me to immerse myself in the multiple roles of Organiser, librarian and Reader. As an Organiser I recruited Human Books via a snowballing process and trained five volunteers who acted as Human Books at the Willagee Human Library engaging in a total of twelve readings involving 20 Readers.

The primary method of data collection was semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 44 interviewees. Interview guides provided a variety of topics which enabled the interviewees to contribute their perceptions of Human Libraries to the research and for interviewer and interviewee to co-construct meaning. Once completed, the digitally recorded interviews were transcribed for use during the analysis process. The research uses constructivist grounded theory as its means of theoretical rendering of the interpretations, presented by the data, of the studied world. This process of interpretation rendered concepts from the data via a process of line-by-line coding, memo writing, the sorting of memos, categorising and theorising. The outcomes of this process, while outlined here, are the topics for discussion in the ensuing chapters.

Chapter 7: Spaces for Rights and Freedoms

People who participate in Human Libraries form perceptions about the dynamic of reading. However, they do not focus solely on these dynamic dialogues alone, they also form perceptions of Human Libraries as physical realities. Participants describe Human Libraries in terms of space and they apply meaning to these spaces. They explain what sort of spaces Human Libraries create and they discuss the relationship that Human Library spaces have with the local spaces in which they are set as well as the public spaces of community and society. Their perceptions also demonstrate how the different roles that people adopt during their involvement with Human Library (Organiser, Human Book and Reader) shape their experiences at Human Libraries and the perceptions they form. This is evident, not only in this chapter, but in each of the following chapters as they discuss the research results.

This chapter examines how participants interpret Human Libraries, define them as spaces and contribute to our understanding of what type of spaces Human Libraries provide people and their communities. It discusses the perception that Human Libraries are encountered as safe spaces that are embedded within public spaces and that they are spaces in which participants talk about discovering difference, the unspoken and a means for negotiating about difference. Perceived in these ways, Human Libraries are spaces that define physical settings as well as functional settings. These perceptions of space are useful for discussing Human Library's aim of countering prejudice and increasing respect for difference and human rights. They are useful for discussing Human Libraries as spaces that are connected with human rights.

The analysis considers ideas about what sorts of spaces are provided by Human Libraries and then discusses how these ideas shed light on this examination of Human Library as a means of informing us about how people can challenge prejudice and increase respect for difference as a means for promoting the rights and freedoms of humans. Six themes were identified during the analysis of the data: spaces for difference; embedded safe spaces; spaces for the unspoken; spaces for dialogue and negotiating difference; rights spaces in a human rights culture; and spaces for human rights enjoyment.

Spaces for Difference

The fact that people who are different tend not to interact is the result of numerous factors. Some people actively avoid difference and others do not know how to find opportunities to meet with difference. Readers, like Catherine F, experience this in their daily lives:

> I sometimes see these people and I don't know, um whether I should talk to them or not and I wonder about their lives but um don't and wouldn't likely have the opportunity or don't think I have the opportunity.

Elizabeth echoes these sentiments, "[y]eah I probably wouldn't just go and bother someone in the street." Catherine F and Elizabeth exemplify a number of qualities that define a sizeable proportion of the population. They are young, white women, who are educated, financially stable who balance family life and work commitments. Their observations illustrate people's reticence to approach people who are different in their day-to-day lives because they carry the perception that it is not possible for them to approach people they do not know in public spaces such as the street. Their observations resonate with research findings into interethnic interaction which conclude that it "appears significantly less common for Anglo-Australians" and that "opportunities for authentic sustained contact were rare or rarely taken up" (Dandy and Pe-Pua 2013, 239). Shauna, an original Organiser of the Lismore Human Library, shares her perception of this phenomenon and what her experience revealed:

> My prejudice was I guess that it was people in the mainstream community that was gonna have the prejudices um towards other people and whether they would come along and engage in um an opportunity that might confront them with that um, and they did.

The "mainstream community" defines people who are generally perceived as not being "different" to the majority of the population. They are people like Catherine F and Elizabeth.

For Shauna, Human Library offers an opportunity in her role as community development officer to create a space that challenges the spaces she otherwise used to engage with people whom communities often define as different:

> I worked with all the kind of what you'd call disadvantaged groups so I worked with the cultural and linguistically diverse communities, people with disability, um gay lesbian um transgender bisexual intersex communities, um older people,

so all the people on the kind of margins […] so when I learned about the Human Library it was like oh wow [laughs] okay here's an opportunity to not only bring all those groups together but to bring them together with the mainstream community for real dialogue for real exchange and I guess for me it seemed quite radical, it seemed that the people who are usually on the margins were going to be brought into the centre of the page and the powerful people the mainstream community who are usually in the centre, were going to have to, listen be in the position of asking the questions […] to actually sit down and listen to someone with a different experience […] I guess the other thing was that, you know at that time there was a lot of prejudice in the media against certain groups in the community and so just having the opportunity to, um allow people if they were willing to take the risk to come and talk with someone that they might be fearful of or um hold stereotypes about and in this safe environment to actually confront those things.

Shauna's reflection demonstrates how her role as Organiser shapes how she perceives and engages with Human Library as a space because she is alert to the need to find spaces that bring different groups together with the mainstream. Her reflection, therefore, indicates the way in which communities are marked out by spaces which influence how people experience life. It is an example of how public space is "experienced differentially, and the pleasures and powers it confers are not distributed evenly but linked to relations of inequality and practices of social exclusion" (Noble and Poynting 2010, 490). Recognising the unequal and exclusionary experience of living within the spaces of the margins and the mainstream, as the result of difference, Lismore used its Human Library to target one of its public spaces as a setting for intergroup contact to promote interaction between people from minority backgrounds and the mainstream (Priest et al. 2014, 40). This strategy opened up a new space: a space for difference.

As spaces for difference, Human Libraries provide opportunities to take a risk to hear the voice of someone who is different. Research into how spaces influence living with difference resonates with this strategy and stresses "the implicit role of shared spaces in providing the opportunity for encounters between strangers" (Valentine 2008). For example, Readers remark that they do not feel able to approach strangers in shared spaces like the street. This perception is supported by Valentine (2008, 326) who cites the British Home Office community cohesion independent review team:

> [S]eparate: educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks, means that many communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lives. Their lives often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote meaningful interchange.

By providing spaces for difference, Human Libraries respond to this phenomenon of "parallel lives." Such a response is necessary as Amin (2002, 967) explains, "urban public spaces are often territorialised by particular groups […] or they are spaces of transit with very little contact between strangers. The city's public spaces are not natural servants of multicultural engagement." Human Libraries are spaces that are servants of difference as spaces dedicated to inviting and welcoming difference.

Human Books, like Larisa, remember Readers who enter Human Libraries because they are spaces that invite people to speak with someone who is different.

> [T]here was one one guy that came and he was just a really, traditional white ocker kind of country bloke and he said look I heard about this so it was a great idea I've never met an Aboriginal never met a Jew never met a Muslim I wanna meet them all and say hello [laughs] say g'day, find out what you're like […] and he did and he went oh wow that's really interesting you know.

David, who attended Launceston Human Library as a Reader, echoes this sentiment:

> The Human Library seems to me to be one way that people including me can, can access a whole range of different people from all different walks of life, of all different values and beliefs um, and learn a whole lot more about um, people's lives people's stories people's beliefs and also learn a whole lot more about ourselves and, by watching how we respond to the, the things that they have to say.

Human Libraries are perceived as spaces in which people can meet others in ways they cannot meet them in other day-to-day public spaces, which Amin (2002) refers to as 'micropublics.' They are places of association such as the workplace, schools, colleges, youth centres and sports clubs.

The Reader who attended a Human Library because he had never spoken with an Aboriginal, a Muslim and a Jew illustrates this. So do Elizabeth and Catherine F who do not approach people on the street because they do not want to bother them but felt comfortable meeting people at Human Libraries. These examples demonstrate how Readers recognise Human Libraries as safe spaces that draw people out of their parallel lives and micropublics into a space for difference.[11] Amin illustrates how Human Libraries act as spaces for difference that are different to other spaces by explaining that micropublics demonstrate that "contact is a necessary condition but not sufficient condition for multicultural understanding, for these are cites of mercurial interaction, divided allegiances, and cultural practices shaped also beyond the school gates" (Amin 2002, 969). He advises that a remedy to this is to encourage people to "step out of their routine environment, into other everyday spaces that function as sites of unnoticeable cultural questioning or transgression" (Amin 2002, 969). This is developed as participants move beyond recognising Human Libraries as spaces for difference and further describe the meaning they attach to these spaces.

Embedded Safe Spaces

Participants refer to Human Libraries using terms such as "safe space" and "safe environment" and they describe them as places for "honest and open dialogue." They feel differently about approaching people who are different at a Human Library because, unlike the street space, Human Libraries, via their Human Books, give permission to engage in conversation with a person who is different. The Human Library is a space in which it is safe to confront the social norms that function in other shared spaces and micropublics. They recognise Human Libraries as physical spaces in which they can safely engage in one-on-one conversations with people who are different. Garry, a Human Book, describes how he contributes to the creation of a safe space by explaining that during readings he is mindful of the need to "respect the communication." It is his intention, as it is with other Human Books, to make sure that readings are respectful dialogues about difference. Respecting the communication illustrates how participants perceive Human Libraries as safe spaces for meeting and respecting difference. In doing so Human Libraries are spaces that offer

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[11] Acting in this way, Human Libraries demonstrate the claims made by Human Library in its Organiser's guide which states that Human Libraries are for people "who want to learn about how to live in and contribute to a peaceful society, and to develop for themselves a fearless and open way of communicating with and understanding others. Such others may live next door or be encountered in the street, in the supermarket, in school or at work. The Living Library is an opportunity for intercultural learning and personal development aimed at people who usually have little access to or time for non-formal educational programmes" (Abergel et al. 2005, 9).

alternatives to people's experiences of "everyday incivility" which contributes to "a pedagogy of unbelonging" (Noble and Poynting 2010, 495). The pedagogic function of social incivility uses prejudice to teach people "to feel they are not competent and legitimate citizens" (Noble and Poynting 2010, 502). As safe spaces that respect difference, Human Libraries are spaces that promote everyday civility and provide a pedagogy of belonging to teach people respect for difference. If people are to engage in these safe spaces, which they do not readily find in society's micropublics, how does this happen?

"Stumbling upon" Human Libraries is one way Readers describe how they have found these safe spaces for difference. This occurs at festivals, community events and in public spaces, also known as "transitory sites" (Amin 2002, 976). Donna recalls stumbling upon a Human Library at a local food and wine festival in Launceston.

> When I went to *Festivale* we were going in it to, for friendship and to have fun and to eat nice food and drink nice wine and I had no idea that I would end up, that I would read a book […] I know that they have readings in the library themselves and in community centres but I thought that was, kind of a stroke of brilliance to catch people at a place like that rather than in a more conventional library setting it was just a beautiful day sitting out under the trees and, I think that contributed to, to the relaxed but open and accepting sort of, manner in which the whole thing was conducted.

Donna stumbled upon the Human Library while attending *Festivale* as a space within her day-to-day life. She did so because the Human Library was embedded in a transitory site within a shared communal space.

This develops Shauna's perception because it demonstrates the capacity of Human Libraries to not merely provide safe spaces for difference but, when placed within other communal spaces, they draw people into them who might otherwise not attend. Placing Human Libraries in communal spaces demonstrates why Priest et al. (2014, 40) assert that "targeting public spaces as settings for intergroup contact as well as to promote accessibility and use by those from minority backgrounds may be a key strategy for reducing racism and promoting cultural diversity." Using Human Libraries in this way is a strategy for engaging people who would otherwise not seek out spaces for difference. It is a strategy of engaging people who detour from their "parallel lives" and micropublics and briefly enter into public spaces and

transitory sites. It resonates with Amin's (2002, 970) concept of "unsteady social spaces" as spaces that engage their participants in different rhythms to those of their regular daily habits which allows for the disruption of prejudice and stereotype. Donna describes this as the "relaxed but open and accepting sort of manner."

While this strategy cannot claim certain success regarding who it attracts, it can argue that it is at least in a position to respond to and challenge the social reality that "even in the most carefully designed and inclusive spaces the marginalised and the prejudiced stay away" (Amin 2002, 968). This strategy for developing spaces that challenge "parallel lives" and encourages inclusivity by inviting people from the margins and the mainstream is considered by activists as "an important part of building a social movement" (Maddison and Scalmer 2006, 115). Human Libraries demonstrate how spaces can work to challenge types of 'publics' such as the way that the powerless challenge the powerful who inhabit the mainstream public sphere and "seek a new order" via "counter-publics" as sites of "agitation" and "identity formation" (Maddison and Scalmer 2006, 206-207). Human Libraries, embedded in public spaces, unsteady social spaces and provide safe spaces for difference that promote everyday civility and belonging. This describes the space but it does not explain how it works to unsteady social spaces.

Spaces for the Unspoken

Edward discusses his experience as a Human Book and raises the issues of prejudice and taboo topics. This made a strong impact on me during my interview with Edward which was as much like a reading as it was an interview. Edward encouraged me to talk to him about anything I wanted. He stressed, "I'm happy to answer. I'm totally open for you." This illustrates Edward's desire to give people opportunities to talk about topics they otherwise would not discuss, including prejudice and taboo. He refers to this using the phrase, "it gets it aired." Edward sees Human Libraries as spaces that give permission to air ideas that people have been exposed to by family or the media and have not been able to carefully think through. Edward shares his belief that Readers are "still trying to define their own responses which are always changing." He regards Human Libraries as spaces to "get people to really question, where they're at and not to be set in their ways, to be fluid, in their responses, yeah to be open minded or try to be open minded [laughs]."

Edward's remarks direct our attention to a more complicated function within "everyday incivility," which is the way that civility sometimes hides attitudes of incivility (Valentine 2008). This will be discussed further below. The way Edward encourages his Readers to ask anything, along with his openness, indicates his willingness to engage with taboo but also shines a light on issues of civility that are related to the way taboo functions within social norms. Edward makes this final observation about his experience of the Human Library space: "It's given me a chance to have conversations with people that I never would have had, I probably would never meet otherwise and very diverse." Edward encourages openness in his Readers and this is something that some Readers struggle to embrace. This struck me personally during my fieldwork because I discovered times when I had to force myself to ask Human Books about topics that I felt would be too sensitive or private. I recall having that reaction when Edward invited me to ask him anything because he was an open book; the mere thought of accepting that offer clashed with what I have been taught since childhood that qualifies as acceptable social behaviour. Readers also share this reaction.

Catie explains that her initial response to the Human Library was discomfort. She feels uncomfortable asking personal questions about sensitive issues because she regards it as breaking social etiquette. She reveals that her choice of Human Book was a way of avoiding Human Books with topics that make her feel uncomfortable. In particular, she feels uncomfortable talking to people with impairment about disability. Roz is a Human Book with the topic of acquired brain injury and she, therefore, represents a topic with which Catie is uncomfortable. Catie relates what happened when, at the end of the Human Library, she found herself standing next to Roz:

> I did recognise in myself perhaps that I avoided it before so I gave myself a little push, at that point and then when we did talk I I did ask her some questions about how she acquired the injury um which I again that sort of pushed myself to go beyond, like making it more than I guess just a polite social conversation.

Finding herself in the space provided by the Human Library presented Catie with the opportunity to meet Roz. The way that Roz and Catie met in the same physical space is an example of how Human Libraries can challenge everyday incivility.

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The meeting between Catie and Roz demonstrates the necessity of confronting prejudice associated with incivility in public spaces. It illuminates how "movement in public spaces is a very concrete dimension of our experience of freedom […] acts of everyday incivility not only limit the citizen-rights of the target to *be* in a given place, but ultimately are experienced as an attack on their *being*, their humanity" (Noble and Poynting 2010, 491). This is demonstrated by Valentine's (2010, 531) study of how attitudes to difference are expressed differently in private and public spaces:

> [I]ndividuals stated that they believed in individual freedom and were not prejudiced against minority groups and yet saw no contradiction in then expressing hostility towards seeing lesbians and gay men kissing on the street, or women wearing the hijab in their neighbourhood, or feeling uncomfortable at the sight of a disabled person in public or being inconvenienced by disabled access provisions.

Valentine's study found that people responded to difference and space by regarding it as tolerable for minority groups to have a visible disability or practise or perform their own sexuality or religion at home but not in public. She explains that this reaction indicates the view that "'their way of life' was then 'imposed' upon majority people or they transgressed 'spatial norms' about appropriate embodied ways of being in public space" (Valentine 2010, 532).

Catie's confrontation with her discomfort moved her from simply being in the same space with Roz to speaking with Roz about her impairment. The Human Library opened a space for Catie to engage in a conversation she would normally avoid. Catie explains how she regards the Human Library space:

> It gives you the opportunity to, um, to talk, to meet people you may not otherwise meet but also, within that to talk to people about things that you may not otherwise talk to them about […] a polite conversation may, lead you to totally avoid it as a topic of conversation whereas the Human Library, lays it all out there and says we're here to talk.

The Human Library enabled Catie to challenge her notion of civility which muted her capacity to engage with difference via a conversation that she normally would leave unspoken.

Cornelia's encounter at the Willagee Human Library adds to Catie's example. She recounts why she decided to take her two young children and what the experience meant for her:

> [J]ust be able to ask because normally we'll say don't probe it's impolite, don't stare you know at somebody in a wheelchair, say don't stare at them and don't just run up and ask them, so allowing kids to be that open and actually asking is really, valuable.

Cornelia used the Human Library as a space to introduce her children to an alternative way of responding to difference and how to speak to people who are different. Cornelia uses the dynamic at the Human Library to teach her children that asking questions in a respectful manner is an appropriate way to interact with people who are different and to learn from them. The Human Library enabled Cornelia and her children to ask questions that children are often taught to keep unasked for fear of offending someone.

Human Libraries provide spaces that allow people to challenge notions of everyday civility and incivility (Noble and Poynting 2010). Catie and Cornelia demonstrate how Human Libraries are spaces that provide people with a means of cutting through social conventions that impose silence on issues of difference, taboos and topics that are difficult and sensitive. Another Reader, Catherine C, refers to this as "an exchange that actually occurs that doesn't happen in any other way." As such Human Libraries offer an opportunity to respond to the way that social conventions are used by some people to behave "in a civil or decent way in public, regardless of your privately held views and values" (Valentine 2008, 329). When social conventions operate in this way they contribute to the development of spaces in which people hide prejudice or find support for prejudice.

People learn to function within this context, which has been created by social conventions, and this results in them only allowing their attitudes to surface in 'privatised' spaces such as their homes or 'closed' group of friends. They behave like this because these spaces are known to them as spaces in which their opinions are shared and validated and even if they are challenged in these spaces, their opinions will not attract consequences beyond the boundaries of these 'privatised' spaces (Valentine 2008). Social conventions encourage such practices and maintain the gap between individuals' values and how they act in public spaces. Therefore, Valentine (2008, 330) asserts:

If we are to produce meaningful contact between majority and minority groups which has the power to produce social change, this gap needs to be addressed. We need to find ways in which everyday practices of civility might transform prejudiced values and facilitate liberal values to be put into practice.

Participants in this study express a reticence to approach people who are different in spaces such as the street, the supermarket, school or work to develop relationships. For them, these spaces are not the spaces for everyday practices of civility that might transform prejudices.

Participants do, however, speak about Human Libraries as spaces in which they meet people who are different and engage in topics of conversation they normally leave unspoken. These perceptions demonstrate that participants recognise Human Libraries as spaces for "everyday practices of civility" that offer them a space that frees them from the usual social norms that are established in the other micropublics of their everyday lives (Noble and Poynting 2010; Valentine 2008). Breaking from these social norms allows new forms of dialogue.

Spaces for Dialogue and Negotiating Difference

Human Libraries are not static spaces; they are spaces for dialogue about difference. Sabina's initial reaction to Human Libraries, as its eventual instigator in Lismore, was that they are:

[J]ust such a convincing way to make personal contact where people cannot then uphold the stereotype that it's all of a sudden it's it's a human being on the other side with all, with warts and all but also with lots what they share um, I thought this would be, just yeah a really really good way and it's not, confrontational, in a way it's, it's, I thought you can go really close to the edge and you know really if you join those groups, that are, very marginalised um, it can really make a difference and, and I guess for me, I had the thought well there is just you know people have one conversation at a time it's one, one person it's big [laughs] big deal you know if I want to change the world [laughs] but but it also has a ripple effect, you know so so then that person, ah even if they, hopefully they talk about it with their friends and their families or even not if if they change a bit their attitude.

Sabina's perception of Human Libraries, as an Organiser, is that they are spaces that are for specific purposes. She speaks about Human Libraries as spaces that are dynamic. That is,

they allow people to "make personal contact" and to "share" in ways that mean they "can go really close to the edge" and "join those groups that are very marginalised." This is dynamic because it is not the "polite conversation" of which Catie spoke wherein people talk to each other on the surface of issues and do not go any deeper and reveal their true beliefs and attitudes. Moreover, because it is a dialogue both persons experience the dynamic.

Intersecting with this perception of Human Libraries as dynamic spaces, Robin explains why he was attracted to becoming involved with Lismore Human Library as a Human Book:

> Probably, more important to me though was the opportunity I could see in cultivating more intimate conversations between people from different backgrounds. We needed, and still do, to broaden our cultural perspectives. We need to be open up new sorts of conversations at all sorts of levels, rather than having the public arena dominated by the media with a more singular and elitist view of society.

Robin expresses the opinion that Human Libraries provide dynamic spaces in which people engage in dialogue which is an alternative to passively listening to the messages provided by the media. The dynamic space marked out by Human Libraries relies upon dialogue.

Freire (1996) uses 'dialogue' to include the everyday use of words as two or more people talk with each other (Darder 2002). He argues that the struggle for the pursuit of our "full humanity could not be carried out in isolation or individualism, but only in fellowship and solidarity" (Freire 1996, 73). However, for Freire, dialogue requires two further components: "action and reflection in dialectical relationship" (Peters and Lankshear 1994, 178). For Freire (1996, 68) "[t]here is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world." According to Peters and Lankshear (1994, 178) "[w]ord without action is mere verbalism; word without reflection is mere activism." Thus, dialogue indicates a process of reflection on speech and action, aimed at transforming the world.

Darder (2002, 82) illustrates this using the example of teaching:

> In the process of teaching, dialogue is considered the self-generating praxis that emerges from the relational interaction between reflection, naming of the world,

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action, and the return to reflection once more. It is a continuous, purposefully motivated, and open exchange that provides participants the space in which, together to reflect, critique, affirm, challenge, act, and ultimately transform our collective understanding of the world.

Adopting this understanding of dialogue as a space in which people engage with each other to transform their understanding of the world, resonates with the assertion made above that Human Libraries are not merely physical spaces but dynamic spaces of dialogue. Henry Giroux (1993) engages in an examination of the relationship between dialogue and space using Freire to develop the concept of 'border-crossing.' This concept contributes to the discussion already presented above regarding Human Libraries and space.

Giroux (1993) argues that Freire's work requires one to become a border-crosser. "[E]ngaged in a productive dialogue with others means producing a space in which those dominant social relations, ideologies, and practices that erase the specificity of the voice of the other must be challenged and overcome" (Giroux 1993, 178). For Giroux, therefore, spaces that are dedicated to dialogue are spaces that challenge ways of acting that erase the voice of the other. This resonates with Shauna's description of Human Libraries as spaces into which people come from the margins so that people at the centre hear them and it also illuminates Catie's dialogue with Roz. Giroux's concept of spaces dedicated to dialogue enables an appreciation of Human Libraries as spaces for border-crossing and those who participate in Human Libraries as border-crossers moving from the sanctuary of their everyday micropublics into the dynamic space of the Human Library. A consequence of dialogue at Human Libraries is the experience of negotiating attitudes about difference.

People engage in border-crossing by moving beyond the safe parameters of the cultural, theoretical, and ideological borders that they have inherited and that shape their concrete attitudes and behaviours. Doing so requires people to attempt to critique and transform these borders by engaging in "discourse as difference" (Giroux 1993, 178). Border-crossers, therefore, are people who move across spaces that are shaped by ideological borders which shape the concrete spaces of life. They do this by challenging discourses of submission and constructing discourses of difference that result in transformation, which includes continuities and discontinuities. Through doing so, they contribute to the construction of cultures of resistance (Stammers 2009).

A reading between Maxine and Rachel illustrates how Human Libraries are dynamic spaces of dialogue and thus become spaces for negotiating difference. Rachel chose to read Maxine because she wanted to discuss how Maxine experienced life as a lesbian. Rachel made this choice because a friend at her high school had come out to her as bisexual and Rachel felt confused and anxious because she thought this would mean that her friend would be attracted to her. Maxine reflects on the reading with Rachel:

> She just took the chance she took the opportunity to, to ask whatever she wanted to ask and so, the facilitation provided by the Human Library process brought them [Rachel and her mother] into contact with somebody completely safely in a way that she could, they could ask questions and um, and learn in a way that they might not ever have been able to do otherwise.

Rachel demonstrates that Human Libraries are spaces for airing issues and critically considering ideas about difference. This allowed her to engage in dialogue and to negotiate how she responds to her friend as someone whose sexuality is different to her own. This is illustrated as Rachel shares what she learnt from Maxine:

> [T]hat she had to suffer a lot because of her um, sexuality like her preference her sexual preference, I don't know if you're, like God created people um to, you know he created the way they were and so, if she was if she says she was born by it why did she have to suffer so much for it like you shouldn't have to suffer for being who you are really are and, who you like and what you like.

The Human Library has provided a safe space for Rachel to dialogue with Maxine: "together to reflect, critique, affirm, challenge, act, and ultimately transform our collective understanding of the world" (Darder 2002, 82). It is what Amin (2002, 970) describes as "sites of social inclusion and discursive negotiation" and what Ackerly (2011, 228) asserts when she states that "[o]ne important role in social movements is to connect issues, to connect different actors, and to create deliberative spaces for them to learn from one another." Rachel has acted in these ways by renegotiating her reaction to her friend's sexuality and, as is evident in her old and new attitudes, has become a border-crosser. More attention will be given to what this dialogue between Maxine and Rachel produced in the next chapter. For now the discussion limits itself to a consideration of what this example means regarding Human Library as a space for negotiating difference.

Appreciating what Rachel's negotiation of her reaction to an alternative sexuality means for this study of the Human Library benefits from Hannah Arendt's (1967) postulation that rights exist which are more fundamental than the rights of citizens; she refers to these as "the right to have rights" (1967, 296). Arendt (1967, 296) argues that this is so because the deprivation of rights is most fundamentally made manifest by the "deprivation of a place in the world which makes opinions significant and actions effective." This becomes apparent for Rachel as a result of entering into a space for negotiating difference and she demonstrates this when she emerges from the space stating, "you shouldn't have to suffer for who you really are." This illustrates Rachel's awareness of the right to have rights and what that means. Rachel's statement highlights her awareness of the right to have rights because she recognises how humans suffer when, regardless of the fact that they are citizens, they are deprived of the freedom to act authentically and express their opinion. Rachel encountered this by negotiating what it means for a person to live in society as a member of a sexual minority. Rachel's example is relevant for other groups such as women, racial or ethnic minorities, indigenes, children, slaves, criminals and prisoners, the mentally ill, the physically less able and resident aliens (Waters 1995, 1996). Rachel's comment indicates her recognition that people whose sexuality differs to her own have a right to have rights, which is made manifest by the freedom to act and express opinions; for them, the right to have rights means being able to live their sexuality authentically, to express opinions about their sexuality and how they are treated and not to suffer as a consequence.

Central to Arendt's (1958) approach to human rights is her conviction that humans are conditioned beings who, in turn, are conditioned by everything they make. However, humans' inherent freedom to act upon their world means that they are never conditioned absolutely. This view of human activity lends itself to an understanding of human rights as grounded upon the human condition, which is defined by life's most fundamental conditions, birth and death, as well as the basic functions that correspond to them: labour, work and action. Grounding human rights in Arendt's conviction is a way of shaping how we act on the relationship between human activity and human rights (Parekh 2007). For Arendt, this action corresponds to the fact that people live together in societies and engage in various activities with one another in public spaces and they use action to communicate their uniqueness and their distinctiveness. Arendt (1958, 178) explains the importance of this to human rights by highlighting the intimate relationship between action and speech as "the primordial and specifically human act [that] must at the same time contain the answer to the

question asked of every newcomer: 'Who are you?'" Action and speech expresses how people share in humanity and are distinct as individuals and this is why Arendt maintains that for a life to be fully and authentically human, it must at least include the potential for meaningful speech and action (Arendt 1958). Without this people are left with little more than the private struggle for necessity and the making of worldly objects. Arendt's assertion of the right to have rights aims to guarantee humans the conditions that make it possible for meaningful speech and action to have a place in the world; this is essential to Arendt's approach to human rights (Parekh 2007).

Satisfying Arendt's approach to human rights, therefore, requires the provision of suitable places that enable meaningful speech and action. The analysis of participants' perceptions of Human Libraries provides descriptions of Human Libraries as spaces that enable meaningful speech and action. This is demonstrated in three ways. Firstly, participants recognise Human Libraries as safe spaces for dialogues about difference, including taboos and sensitive topics. As spaces for conversations that are open and honest, Human Libraries promote dialogue that respects authentic lives. Secondly, Human Libraries are embedded in public spaces; they are public events that welcome anyone and everyone and do not operate clandestinely or in secret. As such, they provide meaningful speech and action a place in the world. Thirdly, because Human Libraries welcome all people and promote the discussion of all topics, they connect different actors and issues.

Rachel's encounter with negotiation also resonates with Amartya Sen's (2004, 321) approach to human rights as "quintessentially ethical demands" that can withstand an "interactive process of critical scrutiny." This approach to human rights employs public reason and open dialogue as a means of ascertaining what qualifies as a human right. This highlights how debating about human rights is part of the meaning of human rights and it keeps before us the reminder that human rights do not indicate a singular and final understanding (Parekh 2007). As a space for negotiating about difference, Human Libraries provide spaces for dialogue about how humans experience their rights and freedoms and they demonstrate how dialogue is a necessary part of the working for people's enjoyment of their human rights. This discussion of the theme of spaces for negotiating difference directs us to consider how Human Libraries, as spaces that are embedded in public shared spaces, are spaces that operate within cultures.

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Rights Spaces in a Human Rights Culture

Participants express the opinion that every person carries some prejudice and they recognise, in varying degrees, how their own prejudices influence their attitudes and behaviours. As a participant-observer, I became aware that the research participants, as well as the people who attended Human Libraries, did not express their prejudices via strongly negative behaviour. Participants spoke of this using the phrase, "preaching to the converted." It refers to people who attend Human Libraries because they are open to challenging their prejudices or exploring topics related to difference. Even people who do not attend Human Libraries respond to being told about its method by asserting that only people who are already open to challenging their prejudices will attend. This raises a worthy question: What do Human Libraries do when they engage people who already want to challenge their own prejudice?

Nathalie reflects on her role as an Organiser and speaks about what it means to involve people who are sympathetic to the Human Library anti-prejudice strategy:

> I mean the purpose is not so much to make those four percent of reluctant people to change who will never change change, it's to get the [...] 96 other percent to become more tolerant and more respectful more understanding of others [...] it's not so much shifting what is difficult to shift or will never shift, it would be a waste of our time, it's actually shifting what can be shifted, and while when you do that then you change the context and you, this context makes it more difficult for the, reluctant.

Nathalie asserts that the value of Human Libraries is that they encourage the tolerant to become more tolerant, respectful and understanding of others. She describes this as "shifting what can be shifted" which results in developing a societal context – a culture of respect for difference - that makes it more difficult for those people who are reluctant to become more tolerant and accepting of difference. People who hold to this position share some of the traits of the participants in Valentine's (2010) study, discussed above, who wish to enforce spatial norms and refuse to accept the public presence of people who are different.

Larisa offers the perspective of a Human Book as she discusses how tolerance, respect and understanding shape societal contexts by turning her attention to prejudice in history:

> Well I think that um, those ordinary backyard stereotypes can get quite

dangerous […] it would have been the backyard prejudices that Hitler played
into and magnified that allowed a very amazingly civilised country like
Germany, to kill six million Jews let alone all the Romanies the, the um, the
gypsies, the homosexuals, the communists, the political dissidents and you
know let alone all those as well which is another few million you know so, I
wouldn't personally underestimate [laughs] backyard prejudices.

Larisa is alert to the way that particular contexts contribute to the development of culture,
which includes the way that people use symbols, values, ideas, language and practices to
make sense of the world and to respond to the phenomena they encounter in it (Rowe 2003).
For example, Larisa's reference to Hitler's Germany demonstrates how a culture developed
within a particular historical context that nourished "backyard stereotypes" to cultivate overt
and strongly offensive stereotypes that led to widespread discrimination and persecution.
Larisa's observations signal how 'everyday incivility' and 'everyday racism' function within
communities and cultivate a culture of prejudice.

Everyday incivility refers to "mundane behaviours in public spaces that are perceived as
mean and insulting" (Noble and Poynting 2010, 492). Everyday racism refers to the way that
ethnic difference is exaggerated via the use of stereotypes and racist jokes and contributes to
a culture of prejudice (Essed 1991; Quillian 2006). It is what was referred to as 'new' or
'modern' racism in the Introduction to this thesis (Pedersen et al. 2005; Every and
Augoustinos 2007). The comments offered by Nathalie and Larisa demonstrate how Human
Libraries respond to this dynamic because they support people to remain aware of the ways
in which prejudice and stereotypes function within communities and their cultures. Noble
and Poynting (2010, 493) explain the importance of encouraging strategies that confront
everyday racism:

[T]he point of focusing on 'everyday racism' beyond the institution is precisely
to highlight the lived experience of racism and its cumulative (over time) and
reinforcing (across a range of social sites) effects. It allows us to see how the
'little things of racism' (Noble and Poynting 2008) add up to a bigger picture
for those experiencing it, and how 'big' occurrences of racism are related to the
everyday and the taken-for-granted.

Larisa's sensitivity to this phenomenon motivates her to approach her role as a Human Book
within Human Libraries as spaces that counter cultures of 'everyday incivilities' and

'everyday racism.' Readers demonstrate the type of culture that Human Libraries cultivate as they explain that they attend Human Libraries with the intention to continue to shift their prejudices and remain alert to how they engage in 'everyday incivilities.'

David attended Launceston Human Library as a Reader with intentions that echo those expressed by Larisa:

> [T]here's so much prejudice and as I see it and stereotyping going on all around us and, and I think everyone of us if we're honest would have to admit inside ourselves, um I can't speak for everybody of course but I do see it in myself and I, ah I think as I grow older I'm becoming better at seeing it and better at, letting it go and not getting in the way of me being involved with other people um, and I also see um, what I think of as perhaps towards the other end of the spectrum where people are very, judgemental and put other people down and even become violent towards other people, because of um differences of, in beliefs and values and the like, um, um, so I'm just generally interested in doing, whatever I can, um to make the world a better place […] through becoming a less, a more open and less judgmental person than I have been in in the past.

David perceives that he lives in a culture of prejudice and stereotyping because they are "all around us." In response to this, he attended the Human Library to seek support to become less prejudiced. Already committed to reducing his prejudices, he regards the Human Library as a space that, via its ideas, values, language and practices, establishes a culture that supports his aim to continue to work on his prejudices.

Michael illuminates how Human Library creates a culture that supports the reduction of prejudice, in people like David, by drawing on his experience as a long-term Human Library Organiser. He comments that "[w]hat it's doing I guess is enriching somebody whose preparedness and openness and maybe thinking oh we hadn't thought about that particularly." This observation is supported by Sherri who regards her reading at a Human Library as helping her to "continue to remain open and non-judgemental to keep that open door, and to open up more." She explains what this means:

> [I]t was more to get to know people better and have better understanding and if there is any subconscious or conscious prejudice, it would come out and should be, oh well I was wrong about that thought or maybe a preconceived idea or

thought of what people are and how they're thinking.

Sherri's comment resonates with the observations offered by the participants above. She engages with the Human Library because it offers a space that houses a culture of respect for difference and it encourages participants to be alert to the way they engage in prejudice and stereotypes. It is a culture in which Sherri discovers values, practices and ideas that encourage her to "remain open and non-judgemental." For example, the practice of reading and the fact that honesty is valued helps her explore her subconscious and conscious for prejudice as well as consolidating her existing attitude of acceptance of difference. Functioning in this way, the Human Library provides spaces that cultivate a culture of respect for difference and that values people's rights and freedoms at the grassroots. They demonstrate how human rights, while operating within a legal or a functionalist framework, are also connected to culture and that they benefit from cultures built around values, ideas and language that support people's rights and freedoms by increasing respect for difference and countering prejudice. In developing such a culture, Human Library may be situated within the human rights culture and seen as contributing to it.

Within the modern human rights culture exist the day-to-day spaces, in which ordinary people struggle for the recognition of their rights and freedoms and the circumstances which enable their enjoyment. Human Libraries participate in this ongoing effort. These day-to-day spaces are struggle spaces and remind us that humans rights "initially emerge as 'struggle concepts'" (Stammers 2009, 3) and that rights and freedoms are as much about the reality of everyday life as they are about institutionalised laws and policies. These two spheres cooperate in the pursuit of human rights and they remind us that the realisation and enjoyment of human rights are "defined, negotiated and enacted within different contexts" (Ife 2010, 139). Using institutionalised laws and policies, political authorities pursue human rights to "foster respect for difference among people, encourage social cohesion and promote the inclusion of people in public life, and build commitment to home, work and community" (Cassin 2006, 300). In the context of these struggles at home, work and in community, people pursue these same human rights so that they may be enjoyed in everyday life (Cassin 2006). Human Libraries operate within this context of struggle which is central to the modern human rights culture.

The UDHR helped shape the modern human rights culture and it indicated a shift in the way human rights were regarded and pursued because it articulated that states no longer enjoyed unchallenged sovereignty and could no longer "govern their populations in an authoritarian manner, but rather, were required to negotiate in relation to popular sovereignty" (Waters 1995, 34). Within this new culture, claimant groups, such as those labelled as 'non-citizens' and people marginalised as 'psuedohumans,' could agitate for their human rights and freedoms which had been previously denied them. Within this modern human rights culture, people have the capacity to pressure political authorities to recognise that it is of equal relevance to their interests to institutionalise rights as much as it is in the interests of the people who make claims for rights (Waters 1996).

Activists consider this process of agitation as a function of social movement organisations aimed at "creating cultural and political space for the challenges that social movements offer to society" (Maddison and Scalmer 2006, 83). The examples presented in this section demonstrate how Human Libraries contribute to the human rights culture, not by pressuring political authorities for the institutionalisation of people's interests but by providing people local spaces that value and promote the enjoyment of rights and freedoms in day-to-day life; they engage in the pursuit of the enjoyment of their human rights "evoked through struggles at the heart of social life" (Hynes et al. 2010). For example, when Maxine engages in dialogue with Rachel about what it means to be bisexual or lesbian she uses the Human Library as a space to negotiate for difference and advances the concept that everyone is entitled to rights and freedoms without distinction, including sexual orientation. In this way Human Libraries provide spaces that value rights and freedoms and that contribute to the creation of a wider culture that values everyday civility, daily negotiations of difference and visibility and encounter between strangers (Amin 2002; Noble and Poynting 2010). While the modern human rights culture indicates the broad space in which human rights are pursued, negotiations by people in the space marked out by Human Libraries, indicates how they are socially contextualised spaces in which people negotiate with their fellow community members for the enjoyment of their rights.

The argument that Human Libraries contribute to this human rights culture by creating rights spaces needs to bear in mind the challenge that the complex nature of establishing cultures presents such a task. However, as Joseph Wronka (1998) asserts, this should not deter us. He

argues that the realisation of human rights requires the development of a human rights culture that includes a "lived awareness" of the UDHR and its associated covenants and treaties but it also requires people to "engage in social movements to guarantee basic human rights and carry these principles into everyday lives" (Wronka 1998, 225). Operating as a social movement organisation within the anti-prejudice movement, Human Library provides people with spaces in which they can discuss their basic human rights which are enshrined in international declarations and treaties. In addition to this, however, the Human Library spaces enable them to advance opinions about how they would further construct their rights as humans. For example, the interaction between Maxine and Rachel demonstrates that Maxine understands her basic rights as a human and she highlights the fact that the right to marriage is not extended to her because she is homosexual.

Ife (2010, 140) explains the difficulties involved in developing local cultures that enable people's interaction with the human rights culture:

> To establish 'a culture' of anything is a major challenge, and because of differences between cultural contexts there can be no single 'right' way to do this. Establishing a culture of human rights is very much more a case of trial and error, of feeling one's way and of engaging in an organic process where there are few 'clear guidelines' or specific 'models of practice'. Nor can one necessarily learn from the specific experience and the achievements of others, as what works in one community will not necessarily work in another.

The observations presented by Shauna and Nathalie demonstrate how these Human Libraries are in the care of people who are engaged with their local communities and the various relationships at work within them regarding marginalisation and prejudice. This is deepened by their awareness that engaging in efforts to change elements of their communities' cultures, particular values, ideas and language that enables prejudice, meets with reluctance to the idea of shifting attitudes and behaviours. However, the qualities that define the Human Library space such as respect for difference, a willingness to negotiate and an atmosphere marked by inclusion, provide an alternative culture to that found at work in people's everyday micropublics. This demonstrates the contribution Human Libraries can make in the broader work of developing local cultures that support the development of communities in which the enjoyment of human rights is promoted.

Functioning in this way, Human Libraries promote a culture that values people's rights and freedoms in the context of everyday life and they support a bottom-up approach to human rights enjoyment. This demonstrates how culture, be it that of a social movement organisation or a local community, is connected to human rights. The culture developed by Human Library, which encourages people to respect difference and counter prejudice, demonstrates how the enjoyment of human rights is connected to culture as much as it is to law. By engaging people in spaces shaped by a culture of respect for difference and rejection of prejudice, Human Libraries connect local communities and the various cultures they maintain, with the values of the modern human rights culture. Ife (2010, 139) explains the connection at work between these cultures:

> If indeed human rights are about the achievement of our humanity, this occurs in relationships rather than in courtrooms, and the focus of human rights work needs to be on culture and relationships. This of course includes relationships within community as well as within families, households, workplaces, and public spaces.

Moreover, Ife asserts that these relationships should be fostered in public spaces. This chapter commenced by discussing how Human Libraries are embedded in public spaces and the ensuing examples have developed an appreciation of the types of relationships that are developed in these spaces when Readers and Human Books engage in conversation. These relationships result from the dynamic at work within Human Libraries and they contribute to the way Human Libraries become spaces of rights and freedoms adding to the ongoing creation of a human rights culture. Furthermore, within these spaces particular rights emerge as rights that should be enjoyed by people in their day-to-day lives.

Spaces for Human Rights Enjoyment

The discussion throughout this chapter demonstrates how several human rights issues emerged as the result of readings and how people recognise their right to enjoy human rights. Rachel became aware of Maxine's suffering as the result of prejudice directed at her because she is lesbian and this also brought Rachel to recognise what life is like for her friend and the impact prejudice can have on how her friend experiences her rights and freedoms as a bisexual woman. Rachel expresses her appreciation of this when she states that "you shouldn't have to suffer for being who you are." This resonates with Article 1 of the UDHR which states that "[a]ll human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (United

Nations 1948, Article 1). Similarly, when Cornelia speaks about reading Maxine with her children to introduce them to the idea of same-sex parents, she demonstrates how Human Libraries raise questions regarding the rights of homosexual persons to marry, form families and become parents. Catie's attendance at the Human Library ended with her pushing herself to read Roz and to confront her discomfort with disability. In the context of the Human Library, Catie was faced with questions about how she responds to people with disabilities. These examples illustrate the ability of Human Libraries to raise human rights issues such as the enjoyment of rights and freedoms, marriage equality and stereotypes regarding people with disability. They demonstrate that readings at Human Libraries highlight people's struggle to enjoy their rights and freedoms as well as the "full context of social inequalities" (Hynes et al. 2010, 824). Subsequent chapters will go beyond recognising that Human Libraries enable a dialogue that engages with specific human rights and will examine how Human Libraries engage their participants in further consideration of the meaning of human rights.

Conclusion

Participants speak about Human Libraries as spaces for difference. They draw people out of their parallel lives and their usual micropublics into spaces that enable them to meet and speak with people who are different about difference. They recognise that this does not happen in other shared spaces (Amin 2002). This can occur because Human Libraries are spaces that are embedded in shared public spaces and they house a dynamic of safe one-on-one conversations about difference that promote everyday civility and belonging (Noble and Poynting 2010). In doing so, Human Libraries respond to research that calls for anti-prejudice strategies that promote interaction between people from minorities and the margins with people from the mainstream (Priest et al. 2014) and that enable people, who rarely engage in authentic sustained contact with people who are different, a means of doing so (Dandy and Pe-Pua 2013).

An outcome of this encounter with everyday civility and belonging is that Human Libraries become spaces for the unspoken. They act as spaces that challenge the privatised spaces of people's lives in which prejudices can be validated rather than challenged. As spaces providing opportunities for giving voice to the unspoken, Human Libraries resonate with Arendt's (1958) concept of deliberative spaces which connect different actors and issues.

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Giving voice to the unspoken enables Human Libraries to act as spaces for negotiating difference which enacts Arendt's demand that the human condition, including the pursuit of human rights, requires meaningful speech and action. Human Libraries provide spaces that enable meaningful speech and action allowing people to speak what is often left unspoken and to negotiate about difference. Functioning in this way they may be appreciated as spaces for border-crossing and those who participate in Human Libraries become border-crossers moving between the margins and the mainstream of day-to-day life (Giroux 1993).

Human Libraries provide the spaces described above and contribute to the development of local cultures for respecting difference by "shifting what can be shifted." As such, Human Libraries function as rights spaces that contribute to the wider human rights culture because they offer spaces that counter other spaces which ignore everyday racism or other prejudices and everyday incivility. Human Libraries provide spaces in which people confront behaviour that labels some people as 'psuedohumans,' and they contribute to the development of local cultures that encourage the enjoyment of their rights and freedoms. Human Libraries provide spaces that develop a culture of respect for difference and in doing so they highlight the bottom-up nature of human rights and how people contribute to the ongoing development of the modern human rights culture at the grassroots.

Human Library operates as a social movement organisation within the context of the modern human rights culture. Within the spaces provided by Human Libraries, people's conversations begin to make connections between the content of their readings and rights. This is illustrated by Human Books throughout the chapter who discussed sexual minority rights and disability rights. Human Libraries provide spaces for raising human rights concepts and bringing to light the way in which people do not enjoy their rights and freedoms in the context of everyday life.

Human Libraries provide people with spaces for difference that are embedded safe spaces in the other shared spaces of local communities. They are regarded by participants as spaces for the unspoken and for negotiating difference. Providing these spaces, Human Libraries become rights spaces within the modern human rights culture and act as spaces for human rights enjoyment. Human Library engages ordinary people in challenging prejudice and increasing respect for difference as a means for promoting the rights and freedoms of

humans. When it does this it provides people and their communities with spaces for rights and freedoms.

Chapter 8: Raising Critical Consciousness

This chapter goes beyond the analysis in the preceding chapter of Human Libraries as spaces and examines participants' perceptions of what happens to them when they engage in Human Libraries. It interprets how participants perceive their participation in Human Libraries as a means for leaving the usual micropublics of their day-to-day lives and engaging in the dynamic of the dialogic space created by Human Libraries. The new knowledge presented in this chapter relates to participants' perceptions of their awareness and consciousness as an outcome of Human Library experiences (Amin 2002; Noble and Poynting 2010).

Raising critical consciousness happens when a person becomes more aware of the context within which they are situated and begins to think more critically about it. Raising critical consciousness increases the capacity of the oppressed and marginalised to critically reflect and act upon their socio-political environment. It is a necessary element in confronting victimisation and oppression and advancing the enjoyment of human rights in people's everyday lives. As participants discuss their encounters at Human Libraries they reveal an evolving process of becoming more aware and critically conscious of themselves and how they relate to people who are different. They share their awareness of feelings of discomfort and they recognise personal prejudices. This illustrates how involvement at Human Libraries can raise critical consciousness about prejudice and its contribution to activist causes (Maddison and Scalmer 2006). Participants indicate new ways of thinking and behaving which directs participants to change their attitudes and behaviours.

Raising critical consciousness, as a concept rendered out of participants' perceptions of their involvement in Human Libraries, finds a rich source of support in Freire's (1996, 1998a, 1973) theory of conscientisation. In addition to Freire, critical consciousness is the focus of other studies, some of which provide useful insights into how critical consciousness contributes to anti-oppression strategies. This chapter engages critical consciousness theories in discussing the process concept of raising critical consciousness. Before engaging in analysis and interpretation of participants' perceptions of their awareness and consciousness, which result from their involvement in Human Libraries, the concept of conscientisation will be revisited.

As discussed in detail in Chapter 5 conscientisation relates to Freire's (1996) concept of humanisation which is the human ontological vocation of becoming more fully human. Humanisation assumes that one of humans' most distinctive qualities is the ability to be conscious of their existence within space and time in a way that shapes how they relate with other humans and the world (Freire 1973). As conscious beings, humans are set apart from other animals that merely adapt to the world as they are capable of modifying their world and becoming more fully human (Freire 1998a). Freire's theory of conscientisation is central to his explanation of how humans, as critically conscious beings, pursue their vocation of humanisation and are capable of transforming themselves and their world. Conscientisation is crucial to the way humans struggle against the things that stand in the way of their humanisation (Irwin 2012).

The discussion of conscientisation in Chapter 5 adopted McLaren's (1994) explanation of conscientisation as the process of critically engaging with the world and others in an act of dialogical transformation with the aim of participating consciously in the sociohistorical transformation of society (Freire 1985). Therefore, conscientisation is concerned with people, as critically reflexive beings, becoming critically conscious of the world and entering into a process of transformative action of making reality and our own human selves (Taylor 1993; Crotty 1998; Yang 2014; Peters and Lankshear 1994). This brief introduction of conscientisation will receive further consideration as the discussion of raising critical consciousness progresses.

The following discussion uses headings by way of structure but that does not indicate or support the understanding, held by some, of conscientisation as a linear process by which consciousness is raised from one level to the next. Such a process does not authentically present Freire's theory and is better regarded as 'consciousness raising.' Conscientisation employed by this discussion "occurs incessantly, with no firm, fixed demarcations between levels or stages, and no end to the process" (Roberts 2000, 145). An analysis of participants' perceptions demonstrates an unfolding and dynamic process involving several aspects: becoming more aware; becoming critically conscious of self; and becoming critically conscious of others.

Becoming More Aware

Participants recall feeling awkward and uncomfortable during their readings. Similarly, they recognise such feelings outside of Human Libraries. An example of this appeared in Chapter 7, which noted Rachel's discomfort with her friend's bisexuality. She expresses this awareness:

Rachel: I remember my friend ah when I was, cause she's German and she was like oh yeah I'm bisexual and immediately I was like ooh, I'm not sure if I want to be your friend anymore because that means you like both guys and girls and just the thought of that just puts me off quite a lot like a girl liking a girl

Greg: mm hmm what puts you off about that

Rachel: I don't know just =

Greg: What's another word for putting you off how else would you describe =

Rachel: = like I thought mm maybe she might like me and I just think of her as a friend and I'm straight and um, I couldn't really visu visu visualise myself being in a relationship with a girl and I just found it very very awkward

Rachel's reflection demonstrates her awareness of feeling uncomfortable about lesbians at the time she read Maxine. It also demonstrates that this feeling of discomfort is connected to her presumption that her friend will want a relationship with her. With this awareness, Rachel explains that she chooses to read Maxine because "I just wanted to know what it was like for her." Rachel is aware of her feelings and she connects them to fear but, at this stage, she has not examined what that fear tells her about how she perceives lesbians. She has not considered her feelings of discomfort as an indication of prejudice or stereotypes. However, other participants do demonstrate that they are critical of their thoughts and feelings.

Some participants are aware of feeling discomfort and frustration during readings. Two examples illustrate this. Catherine F reflects on her reading with a young woman who is blind:

I just thought I'm perhaps a very closed person like I'm just doing my um daily

routine […] I realised how closed minded I was because I asked her a really stupid question […] just ah how ignorant I was how I hadn't um really try to put myself in someone's shoes.

Catherine F relates her awareness of feeling stupid and ignorant while reading her Human Book. Her reflection has continued beyond the reading. She suggests that her feelings are the result of her being closed-minded. As a result, she is reconsidering the value of her daily routine, how she learns about other people and she recognises a desire to try and be more aware of the lives of other people and "try to put myself in someone's shoes." This phrase also resonates with the concept of 'parallel lives' discussed in the previous chapter (Amin 2002). Catherine F is aware of the disconnection between her life and that of her Human Book. In this brief reflection, Catherine F demonstrates critical awareness because she is not merely aware of her feelings, she has started to learn about herself, understand herself better and to consider new ways of behaving.

Becoming critically aware moves participants to recognise their prejudice. Sabina reflects on her involvement in organising Lismore Human Library and explains how she became aware of one of her prejudices:

I had the experience with um disabled people um I, I just I realised that I, I don't have contact I sh, I shy away from it, I go out of my way not to connect.

As the instigator of Lismore Living Library, Sabina was responsible for sourcing Human Books. This brought her into contact with people who wanted to volunteer as Human Books because they experienced prejudice aimed at a disability. Sabina's observation reveals her awareness of her discomfort with disability and her recognition of how she acts in response to her discomfort.

Sabina, Catherine F and Rachel highlight how their involvement at Human Libraries resulted in them becoming more aware of their feelings of discomfort with difference. They also illustrate how this encourages them to want to know more about their feelings and what they tell them about themselves and how they treat people who are different. It demonstrates the role that positive intergroup contact can play in diminishing feelings of anxiety about interacting with outgroup members and how diminishing anxiety is used an a mediator for decreasing prejudice (Stephan and Stephan 1985; Paolini, Harris, and Griffin 2015; Stephan

2014; Swart et al. 2011; Mak, Brown, and Wadey 2013). Rachel felt awkward with lesbians. Catherine F admitted feeling stupid while reading a Human Book who is blind. Sabina shared her awareness of shying away from encounters with people with disabilities. Each of these participants exhibits critical awareness by being able to make some sense of their feelings of discomfort and anxiety. Rachel realised feeling "awkward" was based on an unfounded fear that her bisexual friend would want a relationship with her. Catherine F explained how she understood that feeling "stupid" had to do with being closed-minded to what life is really like for people who are blind. Sabina explained how she confronted herself for allowing her feelings about people with disabilities to stop her from engaging with them.

Appreciating the critical awareness exhibited by Rachel, Catherine F and Sabina can be understood in terms of conscientisation. Their awareness of their feelings highlights the relationship between humanisation and conscientisation because it illustrates the distinctive quality of humans to be conscious of their existence and make themselves the object of their own reflection. Their experiences resonate with findings by anti-prejudice studies that highlight intergroup dialogue and awareness strategies as ways of addressing prejudice. For example, some studies demonstrate that intergroup dialogue addresses prejudice by engaging participants in changing their feelings (Dessel 2010) and by engaging people in adopting a reflexive stance toward their own, and others', attitudes, behaviours and beliefs (Kowal, Franklin, and Paradies 2013). Similarly, Rachel, Catherine F and Sabina reveal themselves to be knowing subjects who are able to achieve a deepening awareness of their social reality and this helps them shape their lives and transform reality (Peters and Lankshear 1994; Freire 1998a; Irwin 2012).

Feelings of discomfort in response to difference are at the heart of the three participants' critical awareness. Participants reveal that they are aware of their feelings of discomfort and they relate their feelings to fear, closed-mindedness and avoidance of difference. The concepts of 'mindfulness of discomfort' (Wong 2004, 4) and 'adult meaning-making' (Mustakova-Possardt 1998, 13) are useful in discussing this as critical consciousness.

Mindfulness indicates a particular way of paying attention to the present that nurtures awareness, clarity and openness. Proponents of mindfulness work across a number of fields such as health, mental health and social work and argue that it is a practice that brings those

who use it to question their presumed view of the world and that it encourages people to turn from categorising and discriminating. Writing about her use of mindfulness with her social work students, Yuk-Lin Renita Wong (2004, 4) explains how she encourages them to "befriend their discomfort" and "listen to what their feeling of discomfort may tell them." She emphasises that their feelings of discomfort indicate a place where change begins because only when they feel uncomfortable will they feel the need for change. Wong offers the following recollection of one of her student's reflections on how she experienced the pedagogy of mindfulness. The student's experience resonates with those of Rachel, Catherine F and Sabina:

> Taking the suggestion of 'go[ing] with the feeling' despite having 'a hard time' doing so, this student was not only able to recognise her privilege, but also realise how she wanted to 'deny' that she 'contributed to maintaining the privilege through subscribing to the process of making assumptions and generalisation.' Being in touch with her feeling, therefore, this student was able to gain insights into how she participated in perpetuated oppression when she let her mind prevail in making assumptions and generalisations (Wong 2004, 4).

It is evident in this example that mindfulness, as a practice within the wider process of critical consciousness, enables people to learn from discomfort and change the way they engage in domination and oppression by subscribing to generalisations and assumptions that maintain privilege. The three participants who are mindful of their discomfort, like Wong's student, challenge their assumptions and become more mindful of the ways that they impose generalisations and assumptions on people different to themselves as a means of maintaining privilege and marginalising others.

This use of discomfort has been included in research on critical consciousness and anti-oppressive social-work practice (Sakamoto and Pitner 2005). Those involved in tasks that are anti-oppressive are encouraged to maintain their discomfort because it acts as a signal that informs their efforts. If people who are involved in anti-oppression work maintain this approach then that alone "makes it less likely that they will impose their values and beliefs" (Pitner and Sakamoto 2005, 684). This approach to discomfort fits within the wider process of critical consciousness. It is regarded as an endeavour in self-interrogation or reflexive knowledge that brings individuals to a more in-depth knowledge about themselves. This occurs within Human Library participants when they recognise themselves as fearful, closed-

minded and shying away from difference. Wong and Sakamoto and Pitner encourage this approach arguing that it goes beyond the experience of the individual and is necessary for moving toward social change, a Freirean understanding of conscientisation.

When the research participants try to understand their discomfort they engage in adult meaning-making and demonstrate how they engage in the process of critical consciousness. Elena Mustakova-Possardt (1998, 13) uses 'adult meaning-making' to define critical consciousness as "an integrative psychological construct which unites private aspects of adult meaning-making with more public aspects of adults' actions in the larger social world." Mustakova-Possardt employs critical consciousness in her research aimed at understanding social responsibility and citizenship. It examines how different people establish morally responsible relationships with the social, cultural, and political realities and allegiances of their lives. The study employs Freire (1973) as its main conceptual source and its use of critical consciousness is informed by Freire's three-stage expression of critical consciousness. The third stage, critical consciousness, has already been explained above and so here it is necessary to provide a brief description of the first two stages.

The first stage Freire terms 'semi-instransitive magical consciousness' to indicate those who can only comprehend matters of survival or those things existing within the biological sphere (Freire 1973). At this stage facts are given a power of superiority. The second stage, 'naïve transitive consciousness,' denotes oversimplification and nostalgia and favours polemics over dialogue. Informed by Freire, Mustakova-Possardt (1998) approaches critical consciousness via three stages: critical analysis of reality; experiencing the sense of connectedness with reality; and collective dialogue and construction in the course of dynamic social interaction. At this point the dynamic process of critical consciousness has moved beyond adult meaning-making and has brought its practitioners to act in the larger social world. When Rachel, Catherine F and Sabina make sense of what their feelings of discomfort are telling them about their attitudes and behaviours, they are engaging in adult meaning-making and entering into the dynamic process of critical consciousness which directs them to act in the larger social world "to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire 1996, 17).

Becoming critically aware of their feelings of discomfort can be interpreted as an integral part of engaging in the overall dynamic of critical consciousness. Pitner and Sakamoto (2005, 685) explain that "critical consciousness involves the process of continuously reflecting upon and examining how our own biases, assumptions and cultural worldviews affect the way we perceive diversity and power dynamics." The research participants demonstrate the outcome of engaging in critical consciousness as the result of attending Human Libraries when Rachel no longer feared her bisexual friend, Catherine F changed the way she thought about blindness and Sabina was able to confront shying away from disability and develop a friendship with a person with a disability. Participation at Human Libraries can engage people in practising mindfulness, learning from discomfort and engaging in adult meaning-making by arousing awareness which directs them to engage in the dynamic of becoming critically conscious. As Freire states:

> But since, as we have seen, [people's] consciousness is conditioned by reality, conscientisation is first of all the effort to enlighten [people] about the obstacles preventing them from a clear perception of reality. In this role, conscientisation effects the ejection of cultural myths that confuse the people's awareness and make them ambiguous beings (Freire 1998a).

Appreciating the process of ejecting cultural myths requires a more advanced appreciation of the dynamics of conscientisation and this requires a consideration of how participants perceive their involvement at Human Libraries as moving them from being more aware to becoming critically conscious.

Becoming Critically Conscious of Self

Speaking openly about arousing critical awareness of their personal prejudices indicates how some participants understand their involvement in Human Libraries as a method for raising critical consciousness within the self. When discussing their experiences at Human Libraries participants include phrases that express prejudice or stereotypes; Human Books also admit to feeling confronted by the differences they meet in some of their Readers. This sheds light on the way that even participants who express a broad acceptance of difference can still carry prejudice which they come to recognise as the result of arousing critical awareness. This shares two similarities with findings in the study by Kudo et al. (2011). Firstly, their study outline that Human Books report gaining "greater self-reflexivity through conversations with the readers and other books" (Kudo et al. 2011, 5). Secondly, student

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Organisers recognise how they judge people based on difference during the process of finding volunteers to act as Human Books and they became critically conscious of "the relational transcendence of the 'us' – 'them' dichotomy" and engage in transcending the *Self-Other* imaginations (Kudo et al. 2011, 6). Similarly, when participants in this research reach a point of critical awareness, they wish to appreciate what their prejudices mean and how they should respond.

Rachel is a good example of participants who become aware of feelings of discomfort and then recognise their connection to prejudice and come to understand this better and respond. Becoming aware of her feeling of awkwardness with her bisexual friend moved Rachel to reflect on her feeling and understand that it was based on fear and a lack of understanding. Her new understanding enables her to respond to her discomfort and choose to behave in a new way. Like Rachel, other participants relate how they have responded to their prejudices as the result of raising critical consciousness.

Each of the three types of participants (Organisers, Human Books and Readers) reveal how they become critically conscious of their own prejudices and what this means to them. Above, we recognised how Sabina was critically aware of her feelings of discomfort associated with people with disability. Aware of her discomfort, and mindful of her role in the Human Library as an Organiser, Sabina entered a process of reflecting on her discomfort when a young man with Down Syndrome asked to volunteer as a Human Book.

> So this guy rang in and said he thinks his his client would be really good and ah […] *I just thought oh* my god [laughs] this what o::::::h how do we do this and and um, and I realised that a::::h, that it, I had this really strong reaction […] that I had, kind of shied away from that and, and in the end it worked out really, it worked well […] we made time and we had a bit of practice run and and, Matthew his name was the the, um he really took to it and it was, yeah it was a really good idea and […] it has made a shift you know now um, in a different context I have a friend in a wheelchair and who has a bit of a speech difficulty I think, and I don't feel ill at ease anymore so it it has, it has, you know had a beneficial effect yeah =
>
> Greg: = […] what do you think helped changed that or what do you think
>   helped you work with that experience, that reaction

[W]ell I think, I mean, once this contact was made I thought I I just need to be you know kind of sensible and go with it and check it out and and [laughs] and ah, and I do, I do reflect on, you know I do a bit of self-reflection and and self you know searching soul searching about what what's happening so, and because the whole project is so much about prejudices and we we all know it comes up you know, what about ourselves and so I thought ah oh you know here's a, kind of a, a dark corner that I hadn't kind of looked at so, so then, once I was kind of thrown into it, it wasn't a big deal or a big effort or it it was actually, easy you know easy to learn I was still kind of over kind of a bit of, anxiousness and but it was easy.

Reminding herself to be "sensible" and engaging in a bit of self-reflection and soul searching allowed Sabina to find a "dark corner" within herself that she realised she had not previously examined. This process, the result of her involvement with her Human Library, was a process of moving beyond her critical awareness of feeling discomfort and anxiousness to critical consciousness. Understanding that she shies away from people with disabilities because she feels anxious moved Sabina to confront her feelings and her behaviour of avoidance. Raising her critical consciousness about how she prejudged people with disabilities led her to confront her prejudice, find an excellent Human Book in Matthew and change her behaviour with people with disabilities even to the point of making a new friend beyond the Human Library context. Raising her critical consciousness moved Sabina to act in new ways that were transforming.

Above, we discussed how Catherine F became critically aware of feeling stupid while reading her Human Book who is blind and she described herself as ignorant and closed minded. Discussing her critical awareness further she explains how reflecting on her experience raised a better understanding of what feeling stupid means. She explains that coming face-to-face with another person and feeling stupid was actually a realisation that she held some prejudices about people who are blind. She explains how prior to meeting her Human Book she imagined people who are blind as "living this ah, miserable life indoors and maybe go into study and go to church and that's it." Reflecting on her feelings and the content of her reading, Catherine F explains her new understanding of blindness, "like I'd think of a person who, um you know has a great sense of humour and goes drumming and loves music and loves walking and nature and all the things that she, um told me she liked to do." Reflecting has moved Catherine F beyond critical awareness and raised her critical

consciousness and she has transformed how she previously applied stereotypes to people who are blind. Forming a deeper appreciation of what it means for participants to raise critical consciousness is informed by Freire's concept of conscientisation.

The examples presented so far illustrate how humans are "conscious bodies capable of acting and perceiving, of knowing and re-creating" (Freire 1998a, 517). When humans do these things they are expressing themselves as beings that are conscious of themselves and the world. This is what makes it possible for humans to engage in conscientisation. When participants at Human Libraries arouse their awareness and raise their critical consciousness of themselves and how they respond to others they are acting and perceiving and knowing and re-creating; they are engaging in conscientisation (Freire 1998a). Therefore, when Human Library participants talk about how they examine the world, become conscious of their own prejudices and act to change them, and when they arrive at a greater understanding of how to confront stigma, they are engaging in conscientisation. They match this description of conscientisation:

> Being critically conscious implies a continuous process of transformation. People who undergo conscientisation are constantly being reconstituted, as they critically reflect on reality, act, change both themselves and the world around them, reflect again on the new reality which results from transformation, carry out further actions as necessary, and so on (Roberts 2000, 152).

The new reality that Freire originally hoped his pedagogy of liberation would construct was the transformation of oppressive social structures and practices in Brazil (Torres 1993). Freire was not satisfied with teaching people functional literacy alone; he was committed to helping people raise their critical literacy of the social conditions which supported the perpetuation of injustice and marginalisation of the oppressed. An important outcome of critical literacy is the provision of equitable access to opportunity (Diemer et al. 2006; McLaren 2002).

While the participants in this research are far from the societal context in which Freire pursued his pedagogy of liberation, they are involved in a process of critical literacy focused on their social conditions because they examine their relationship to the structure of society (Freire 1974). Freire's conception of literacy helps us appreciate how this is so because it aims to understand how marginalised groups resist being entrapped by society's dominant

culture and its effort to block them from the processes of empowerment (McLaren and da Silva 1993). Freire (1996) demonstrates this when he asks:

> Who are better prepared than the oppressed to understand the terrible significance of an oppressive society? Who suffer the effects of oppression more than the oppressed? Who can better understand the necessity of liberation? They will not gain this liberation by chance but through the praxis of their quest for it, through their recognition of the necessity to fight for it.

Human Books, in particular, engage in this process because they hold the intention of raising awareness about the lack of equitable access to a variety of opportunities. This is also the case for Readers. Catherine F, Sabina and Rachel were encouraged along the path to critical literacy of their societal context and to a greater consideration of what it means for people to gain equitable access to opportunities when they became critically conscious of their reactions to blindness, sexuality and impairment (Rahnema 1974; Mashayekh 1974). Raising critical consciousness does not simply occur, it results from a process of reflection.

Critical consciousness cannot exist outside of praxis, which is the authentic union of action and reflection upon the world in order to transform it (Freire 1998a, 1996). Therefore, in engaging in conscientisation participants simultaneously engage in praxis. This occurs within the context of readings at Human Libraries. In these dialogues between Human Books and their Readers we witness the union of action and reflection which results in transforming experiences. They demonstrate how dialogue is a "self-generating praxis that emerges from the relational interaction between reflection, naming of the world, action, and the return to reflection once more" (Darder 2002, 82). This form of dialogue is an intentional and open exchange that welcomes participants into a space in which they cooperate in a process that aims to "reflect, critique, affirm, challenge, act, and ultimately transform our collective understanding of the world" (Darder 2002, 82). The dialogue in which Human Library participants cooperate demonstrates how Freire's dialogue of self-generating praxis can be enacted. The research participants speak about their readings in ways that demonstrate they share much in common with this idea of dialogue as self-generating praxis.

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Sabina provides an example of this when she recognises her reaction to Matthew becoming a Human Book because he is a person with Down Syndrome. Reflecting upon her reaction in a critical manner allows her to shine a light into a "dark corner" that she had avoided examining. As a response to this she spoke to Matthew's carer and she met with Matthew to share in a practice reading. She discovered that her reticence was unfounded and uncovered a deeper realisation that she also avoided other people with other types of disability. Reflecting on her new realisation led her to confront her feelings of discomfort, and the prejudices beneath them, to the point that she transformed her behaviour and established new friendships with people she would previously have avoided. Sabina's response to her feelings about Matthew exhibits the dialectic movement of Freire's praxis: "action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action" (Freire 1974, 74). The examples provided by Sabina, Catherine F and Rachel demonstrate how participation in Human Libraries were part of how they transformed the way they treat people who are different and they illustrate how readings are dialogues of self-generating praxis. Interpreted in this way Human Libraries engage people in raising critical consciousness by offering opportunities to engage in praxis. Raising critical consciousness not only occurs within participants as they reflect upon themselves, participants also raise their critical consciousness of others.

Becoming Critically Conscious of Others

Acting as a Human Book not only allows participants to raise their awareness and to be more critically conscious of themselves, they also come to look at their world in a more critical way as they engage with other people who attend Human Libraries. Having a strong background in activism and advocacy has made Maxine very aware of the way in which prejudice and stereotypes operate in society, particularly regarding homosexuality. During one of her readings Maxine encountered prejudice towards homosexuals which made her recognise that she had been living with the mistaken assumption that the wider community was more accepting of homosexuality than may be true. Reflecting on this, Maxine revealed the realisation "that the Human Library experience could expose me to people who have negative and prejudicial attitudes that I would otherwise usually avoid." Responding to this new understanding, Maxine raises her critical consciousness in several ways.

Maxine has become critically conscious that her understanding of society's attitude toward homosexuality has been shaped by her choice to look at those parts of society that accept

homosexuals while avoiding to look at those parts that are not accepting. She explains that she normally only encounters prejudice via the news media and so she remains one step removed from experiencing homophobia. She admits that encountering prejudice via the news media is still upsetting but because it is it at a distance it affects her less than face-to-face homophobia. An encounter with a Reader broke that distance and brought prejudice close to her:

> Throughout the experience of um homophobia close to me, made me realise that I'm not as impervious to that as I might have thought I was that um, that homophobia if it's something that you examine within yourself and if your own experience in the world is something you examine, which I do […] it can be hurtful yeah, it can be hurtful to, I mean it's hurt, it was hurtful for me more on behalf of his son because I could relate to the suffering that his son was having, would have been having […] dealing with this kind of attitude so close to home, so close to himself.

Maxine is critically aware of how this encounter has made her feel and via a process of reflection, which she refers to as self-examination, she comes to a critical consciousness of how prejudice operates in the world, particularly in her own community. Raising her critical consciousness has helped her appreciate how she avoids meeting prejudice face-to-face and how this distorts her understanding of how prejudice operates in society.

Reflecting on this experience of homophobia encountered in her Reader helped Maxine understand how homosexuals still suffer as the result of meeting homophobia in their communities and their own families. Her process of reflection has allowed her to raise her critical consciousness and understand the source of her own hurt which leads her to a critical consciousness of her Reader's son whom she perceives as the target of his father's prejudice. Maxine's experience illustrates how involvement in Human Libraries can raise participants' critical consciousness of others, allowing them to see the world in more critical ways. Maxine's experience illuminates the importance of assisting people to better understand how prejudice influences how people experience the suppression of their rights and freedoms in day-to-day life. It is a part of what Donnelly (2013, 16) means when he warns against allowing human rights to remain a "utopian ideal" because people fail to find realistic practices for implementing the ideal. It is one thing to assert the ideal that people have the right to enjoy a life of dignity and respect and it is quite something else to recognise that this

ideal is often not realised and that people who suffer prejudice are denied the enjoyment of dignity and respect. Raising critical consciousness contributes to the promotion of the enjoyment of the ideal of human rights. It also demonstrates how raising critical consciousness is a practice that can contribute to human rights activism. This will receive more careful discussion in Chapter 10. However, it is worth noting that raising critical consciousness of others is a necessary part of promoting human rights enjoyment because it demonstrates how activists, who make direct connections with others and generously share the wisdom they have gained through experience, freely develop relationships based on conversation. This is something that "many contemporary activists find most compelling and exciting" (Maddison and Scalmer 2006, 169-170). This relationship of conversation contributes to the wider process of encouraging participants to transform their prejudices as the result of becoming critically conscious of how prejudice operates in others.

The experiences of two Human Books, Angela and Diane H, reveal how becoming critically conscious of the prejudices in others has helped them understand prejudice and to transform the attitudes and behaviours associated with the prejudice they discover in themselves. Angela recounts discovering prejudice in her fellow Human Books as they reacted to her title:

> [W]e had some, some meetings very early on where we talked about, um how we would operate and I think the really interesting thing was that in one of the sessions I said what we have to recognise is the prejudice that we have as books and um a number of the books were quite surprised about that so I was quite surprised that they were quite surprised [laughs] and then I did experience, I mean some of my the most um negative stereotypes had actually come in my conversations with fellow books which I thought was [laughs] really interesting but we're a cross section of the community.

Going a little deeper into this experience of prejudice, Angela shares a more specific encounter:

> [A]mongst some of the the books that I had identified as having been uncomfortable ah around me as a lesbian so much so that some couldn't actually use the word in the title to my book um, they certainly, they got to know Angela as opposed to the lesbian so they got to be a lot more in fact extremely comfortable oh hello, a cup of tea blah blah blah, [the] factor of being

a lesbian for them just dropped away as you would expect it to

Greg: ah with you or with the fact that some people are lesbians

I don't know don't know I can't measure it cause it wasn't happening in that space but in that space they got to know Angela as a person and the lesbian part just faded into the background.

Angela's recognition that Human Books need to be aware of their own prejudices demonstrates that Angela is critically aware of prejudice. Introducing this into conversations with her fellow Human Books is her way of raising the critical consciousness of her fellow Human Books. In addition to this, it demonstrates how the interaction within the group of Human Books develops a dynamic that enables group membership to have a positive influence on prejudice when people become more tolerant as a result of identifying with groups that are tolerant. For example, Louis et al. (2012, 94) assert that "group members who identify with groups which have norms of tolerance will become more tolerant when that identity is embraced." Angela and her fellow Human Books are enacting this dynamic as they engage in a process of being more critical about the world and their relationship with it. As a result of raising her critical consciousness, and that of her fellow Human Books, she experienced some change in the way her fellow Human Books treated her.

As a result of reflecting on how she experienced prejudice in other Human Books, Angela examines her own prejudices and how she treats other people, especially other Human Books. Angela perceives that she learns to be more patient:

Yeah it made me a lot more patient well um no it it actually did change my overall attitude I realised that, that I have a level of impatience um, with people who are older and and and struggle to actually, you know tell a coherent story I'm very [knocks on the table].

To illustrate this transformation, Angela shares the following experience of being a Reader with an older Human Book:

No I went […] what is a living book why am I here and and you know this is his personal experience and I'm not you know this is not something that I'm I'm normally um exposed to so um you know you're here for this so no I I can do that much but I'm actually a lot more open now to that.

Being critically conscious of the prejudicial behaviour of her fellow Human Books has encouraged Angela to become more critically conscious of her own prejudices and the attitudes and behaviours that are associated with them. This motivated her to transform some of the ways she treats people. Diane H echoes Angela's transforming experience.

Becoming critically conscious of the prejudices that other people hold has enabled Diane H to better understand her prejudices. This happens as a result of using her title and description:

> *Why doesn't she just eat?* Living with an eating disorder. Explore the insight to having an eating disorder. Chronic anorexia. Recovering and moving on in life.

Diane H's topic allows people the opportunity to discuss prejudice and eating disorders. This prejudice is expressed by dismissive remarks such as, "Why can't you just eat?" and "Just go home and eat." Discussing these remarks with her Readers allows Diane H to address the incorrect perception that eating disorders are a form of attention seeking. Such remarks mean that the stigmas Diane H meets in other people are quite obvious, openly expressed and easily recognised. Encountering these stereotypes has led Diane H to become critically conscious of her own prejudices. She states that being a Human Book is "making me even more non-judgemental and open-minded" and has "made me um, more ah, patient towards misunderstanding."

Engaging in Human Libraries and meeting prejudice has encouraged Diane H to want to better understand prejudices and the people who hold them. Growing in critical consciousness has increased her desire to understand why people regard eating disorders with prejudice and dismiss them with stereotypes. This has enabled Diane H to understand why it is difficult for some people to understand what an eating disorder is really about. Diane H illustrates her developing critical consciousness via two examples. Firstly, she offers the example of cultures that revolve around food and eating and how she has come to understand that often people in these cultures find it virtually impossible to imagine that someone could not eat. Secondly, she provides the example of some Readers commenting that they would benefit from eating less and throw away remarks like, "Oh yes, I could do with a bit of anorexia myself." Diane H then explains that these reactions to her eating disorder "used to really irk me." After reflecting on Readers' comments more critically she came to understand them as expressing misunderstandings. As a result of raising her critical consciousness Diane H is able to state, "I don't get that horrible little irk inside me

anymore." She has come to understand that inappropriate or insensitive comments about her eating disorder often reflect the person's inner thoughts and express how they feel about their own use of food and eating. Diane H explains that she now appreciates that such comments are often the Reader's way of expressing something about themselves, their culture or their desire to manage their own overeating rather than a prejudice aimed at her. As a result, Diane H believes that these comments often say more about the Reader's self-image than they do about the Reader's attitude to her, in particular, and eating disorders, in general.

For Maxine, Angela and Diane H, participation as Human Books has engaged them in conscientisation as an empowering process. Maxine acknowledged her gap in understanding of the ongoing prejudice that is still experienced by homosexuals in her own community. Angela challenged her fellow Human Books to confront and change their own personal prejudices and, as a result, to change her own. Diane H forced herself to better understand what it means when people use dismissive remarks about her eating disorder. Maxine, Angela and Diane H participate in Human Libraries and engage in conscientisation and demonstrate how it is "a process by which the capacity for critical thinking by the oppressed – of themselves and, ultimately, the society they live in – can be expanded" (Blackburn 2000, 7). By introducing participants to this process of conscientisation Human Libraries can make a contribution to the way in which people are encouraged to reconsider how they and society enhance or impede people's enjoyment of human rights. As the examples considered here demonstrate, this encourages them to respond.

Humans' critical consciousness means they can recognise the ways in which their existence is conditioned and in response to this they may set themselves goals which they pursue via transforming acts upon the world (Freire 1998a).

> Their reflectiveness results not just in a vague uncommitted awareness, but in the exercise of a profoundly transforming action upon the determining reality. Consciousness of and action upon reality are, therefore, inseparable constituents of the transforming act by which [people] become beings of relation (Freire 1998a, 500).

Conscientisation, therefore, aims to produce action that transforms the world. For Freire reflective action aimed at transforming the world results in an awareness of the conflict

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which exists between cultural action for freedom and cultural action for domination. He explains this conflict, "[w]hereas cultural action for freedom is characterised by dialogue, and its preeminent purpose is to conscientise people, cultural action for domination is opposed to dialogue and serves to domesticate people. The former problematises, the latter sloganises" (Freire 1998a, 514). Cultural action for freedom, by problematising and conscienticising, aims to transform the world by announcing a new reality to be wrought by human struggle and achievement in an ongoing revolution. This process of transforming the world is the process of humanising it. Freire (1998a, 501-502) stresses the importance of this task of transformation:

> making the world human may not yet signify the humanisation of [people]. It may simply be impregnating the world with [people's] curious and inventive presence, imprinting it with the trace of [their] work. The process of transforming the world, which reveals this presence of [people], can lead to [their] humanisation as well as [their] dehumanisation, to his growth or diminution.

Human Books and Readers express how they understand the world and their place in it as conditioned. This is demonstrated via Rachel's awareness of her discomfort with her friend, Angela's recognition of prejudice within her fellow Human Books as well as her own prejudices, Maxine's surprise as she encounters homophobia close to her and Catherine F's discovery that she views the world with a closed-mind. These examples illustrate how participants become critically conscious about how they have been conditioned by the societal contexts in which they live. Furthermore, they also demonstrate how critical consciousness raises their awareness of the need to transform themselves and how they act upon the world. As they discuss these realisations they demonstrate how their participation at Human Libraries triggers their ability to consciously and intentionally transform their world as an outcome of their reflection on the world and their place in it (Roberts 2000).

This is not to assert that participants necessarily embark on extensive programs aimed at transforming the world at large, to do so would require a long-term study directed at this matter, but it does illuminate the way that participants embark on acts of transformation within their particular corners of the world. For example, Rachel changes the way she responds to bisexuality and lesbian relationships, Angela listens more attentively to people

she had previously not had the patience to speak with, Sabina not only stops avoiding people with impairments but she consciously makes the effort to form new friendships with people she had previously avoided and Catherine F alters how she perceives what it means to live with vision impairment. This finding indicates the ability that Human Libraries have to direct participants towards transforming themselves and their own actions and, in so doing, to bring about small transformations in their particular parts of the world. Two points are worth noting. Firstly, as indicated by the discussion in Chapter 10, it requires an examination of how action and activism are related to participation in Human Libraries. Secondly, this finding alerts us to the need for further research that examines how such incremental acts of transformation might indicate wider transformations within local communities and how Human Libraries are able to contribute to more significant transformations within societies. Furthermore, it indicates the need for long-term studies that explore what changes occur in participants of Human Libraries over longer periods of time as a result of their ongoing participation.

These findings demonstrate the outcomes that occur when Human Library participants engage in a process of problematising and moved away from sloganising which leads them towards new freedoms and away from diminution. Via their dialogues at Human Libraries these participants have become critically conscious beings who have embarked upon a struggle to continue moving towards transformation and humanisation and, although these are never fully attained, they imprint the world with traces of their transformation (Freire 1996).

Conclusion

Participants speak about their involvement in Human Libraries in terms of it raising their awareness as well as their critical consciousness of themselves and others. Interpreting these perceptions produces the process concept of raising critical consciousness. Two interrelated Freirean (Freire 1996) concepts contribute to the theorising of this process concept: humanisation, which is the human ontological vocation of becoming more fully human; and *conscientização*, the process of people, as critically reflexive beings, becoming critically conscious of the world and engaging in transformative action on themselves and their reality.

Building on these foundations, the chapter engaged the concepts of mindfulness (Wong 2004), mindfulness and discomfort (Sakamoto and Pitner 2005; Pitner and Sakamoto 2005) and adult meaning making (Mustakova-Possardt 1998) to discuss the role that awareness plays in moving people to critical consciousness. These concepts resonate with the perceptions of Human Library participants who reflect on their encounters and demonstrate an awareness that feelings of discomfort are a reaction to encounters with difference. This connection demonstrates how participants' awareness is a step in moving beyond simple awareness of feelings to being critically conscious of their feelings, attitudes and behaviours. The chapter argued that Human Library participants engage in critical consciousness which directs them "to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire 1996, 17). The experiences provided by Rachel, Catherine F, Sabina, Maxine and Diane H illustrate how Human Libraries engage people in practising mindfulness, learning from discomfort and engaging in adult meaning-making and, as a result, arouse awareness and engage in the dynamic of conscientisation which directs them to transformative actions.

These outcomes led to a deeper consideration of critical consciousness via the concepts of reflexivity, praxis and transformation. Critical consciousness surfaced as Human Library participants talked about how they examine the world, including their emotional responses, become conscious of their own prejudices and act in transforming ways. Via this process, they arrive at a greater understanding of how to confront the stigmas, which are applied to them and which they apply to other people, and they enter into the process of conscientisation. As a vehicle for promoting conscientisation, Human Libraries encourage people to reflect on how they and society enhance or impede people's enjoyment of human rights and freedoms. This develops via praxis aimed at transformation.

Participants' experience of Human Libraries as an evolving process demonstrates how Human Libraries enact Freire's praxis as action, reflection and reflection upon action resulting in a new action. The examples provided by Sabina, Catherine F and Rachel demonstrate how their participation in Human Libraries engages them in this Freirean praxis and results in transforming the way they treat people who are different or express an intention to do so. This transformation of prejudice results from a process of problematising, a movement away from sloganising and leading to new freedoms and away from diminution.

Human Libraries engage participants in conversations with people who are different about difference. Participants' perceptions demonstrate that Human Libraries: offer opportunities for people to become aware of their emotional responses to difference; invite people to become critically conscious of how emotional responses to difference express prejudice; provide a starting point to continue moving towards humanisation as part of the process of transformation; and, even though it cannot offer human rights as a completed end, it provides a "realistic practice for implementing that ideal" (Donnelly 2013, 16) which is raising people's critical consciousness about what it means for people to enjoy their rights and freedoms.

Human Libraries enable people to become more aware, to become critically conscious of the self and to become critically conscious of others. In doing this, they engage people in raising critical consciousness which is a necessary part of challenging prejudice and increasing respect for difference as a means for promoting humans' rights and freedoms.

Chapter 9: Human Recognition

Constructing meanings of difference about what it means to be human is an ongoing and often unconscious task in which people engage on a day-to-day basis. People who attend Human Libraries are invited into this process of construction and meet with people who are different to discuss what difference means as part of being human. During discussions about difference, participants also perceive how they share common ground. These perceptions of difference and common ground provide participants with material for constructing meanings of what it is to be human and how they recognise the humanity of other people.

When people construct meanings of what it means to be human they participate in the ongoing discussion of human rights because this contested concept requires an interpretation of what it means to be human in order to appreciate what rights humans require and are meant to enjoy (Ackerly 2011; Baxi 2008; Ife 2010; Stammers 2009). This chapter examines how participants interpret their encounters with people at Human Libraries via the themes of difference and common ground. It also discusses how they interpret their encounters as a process of constructing personal identity and how their experiences with other humans can be interpreted within the theme of recognising humans as rights bearers. The chapter will present its discussion of these four themes to explore the process concept of human recognition.

Being Different

Participants connect being different to being human. They demonstrated this in two ways: Human Books represent people who are perceived as different and act to increase respect for difference; and Readers recognise difference as part of what it means to be human.

Human Books and Difference

Human Books confront prejudice and stereotypes, which are the result of people failing to respect difference in others because they represent some point of difference to the majority of people. People who agree to be Human Books have been drawn into the program because they or their beliefs, attitudes or situations are considered by other people and themselves to be different because there is something that distinguishes them in some way from the

majority of people. Human Books are charged with the task of engaging people in conversations about what makes them different. This means that Human Books need to have embarked on a journey of accepting and respecting the ways they are different so that they can appreciate that being different is part of being human. This equips Human Books to help Readers consider what difference means and how it is part of being human. Such conversations have the potential to invite people beyond merely recognising and being aware of difference to accepting and respecting difference. The years of dealing with negative reactions to their difference have shaped the characters of those who volunteer as Human Books. Being a Human Book can encourage and support this process and an outcome of this process is an acceptance of what makes them different and an increased respect for themselves as humans who happen to be different.

The phrase, "I feel quite comfortable in my own skin," illustrates Human Books' self-acceptance and self-respect. Angela explains how acceptance and self-respect informed her decision to become a Human Book:

> I felt quite confident [that] whatever would come that I'd be able to have engagement with someone and I thought that I should use that to um basically assist people [in] thinking about their views about people, that perhaps in the past they've either never met or they had some fairly stereotypes views about. So I was kind of putting myself out there 'cause I thought I could do it.

Angela's level of self-acceptance led her to a point of confidence and "putting herself out there" by volunteering as a Human Book. Similarly, Roz succinctly states the self-acceptance which underpins her approach to being a Human Book, "I know I'm Roz and I'm fine."

This self-understanding supports Roz in her role as a Human Book which is her way of promoting greater acceptance and respect of difference. Roz approaches difference with the belief that:

> [E]veryone is so different look beyond the surface look beyond what you can see you know and there's so much more underlying […] there's much more of a story to someone rather than what you perceive what you're looking at um don't be so judgemental you see, find out.

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Wanting people to "look beyond the surface" is Roz's way of explaining how prejudice is the result of failing to think more deeply about difference. It expresses her desire to help people to think more critically about the meaning of difference as it relates to being human. For example, people are aware that Roz is different but unless they look beneath her surface they remain unaware of what her difference means. She describes living with acquired brain injury by stating that "[i]t's not a disability it's uniqueness." Living with acquired brain injury and prejudice has taught Roz the importance of being critically aware of people's differences and "to accept and to embrace people with uniqueness." Angela and Roz accept and respect their differences as part of what it means for them to be human. They offer Readers opportunities to discuss and think more critically about difference and move towards respecting difference as part of being human.

Human Books use discussions about difference to connect with their Readers. Robin describes that readings about difference are a way

> to actually connect people from different walks of life from different life experiences, just to share those personal experiences so you get a better understanding of people that we live with and people we live with get a better understanding [of] people they live with it's um, it's a it's a fantastic social means of people getting to accept each other that's what it really comes down to, accepting our differences.

Creating better understanding between people from different walks of life and different life experiences helps Readers appreciate how being different is part of being human.

Readings about difference help people clarify misunderstandings of difference and come to a better understand of difference. Garry provides an example of lack of understanding of difference which he experiences as a gay man:

> It's interesting to interact with people because they'll go, "Oh but you don't look gay." That's a very classic statement […] it's a good way of entering a discussion with the readers and say well what does a gay person look like.

Garry's question challenges his Readers to think more critically about what it means to be a gay man and the connection they make between being gay and 'looking gay.' It asks people to critically consider the stereotypes that are applied to men who are different because they

are gay and how stereotypes distort what it means to be a human and, more precisely, what it means for this particular individual human as a gay man.

Moreover, Garry provides a deeper example of the way that greater understanding of difference is constructed during readings. Garry recalls a reading with a nursing student in her early 20s who asked, "Who's the female and who's the male in the relationship?" He explains his response:

> Well no actually, it doesn't work like that I said and that's quite a [inaudible] a early 20 year old woman, studying a university degree to ask that question in 2012 is pretty wow it's like wow, some people still think like that […] I said no it's not it's not it's not, it doesn't operate like that at all I mean and I can't think of anybody I know that that operates in that context these days, and I said that's a question that I would wouldn't have been surprised if you asked it in 1973 but asking it now is kind of quite astounding, and she couldn't explain why she had that perception that's how male couples operated or defined roles in their relationship and so forth and so she was left kind of with a completely new perspective.

The Reader tries to understand gay relationships through the lens of heterosexual relationships. Garry is able to explain the differences between these two types of relationships and help his Reader construct a new understanding of gay relationships. This example demonstrates how Human Books work with their Readers to construct new understandings of difference. It engages them in a process of thinking more critically about how people are different and how difference is an integral part of being human and how difference is an authentic quality within being human.

These examples demonstrate how readings help participants come to recognise that difference is part of being human. In doing so, Human Libraries challenge attitudes and behaviours that dehumanise or label some people as 'sub-human' because they are different. Their approach resonates with Rorty's (1999) sentimental education which aims to sufficiently acquaint different kinds of people with one another so that they are less inclined to think of those who are different as quasi-human. The goal of this manipulation of sentiment is "to expand the reference of the terms 'our kind of people' and 'people like us'" (Rorty 1999, 74). Ife (2010, 71) recognises this as a necessary response to the humanist

tradition's construction of an ideal of 'human' as "a white, European, adult, male, able-bodied, of above-average intelligence and with a high level of education." This construction of the 'ideal human' enabled European colonists to label indigenous peoples as less than fully human and to treat them as such. This lingers in contemporary societies, as the experiences of the Human Books demonstrate. Ife (2010, 70) captures and expresses this lingering use of prejudice:

> People with severe intellectual disabilities, brain damage or serious dementia have also been regarded as not fully human, and are sometimes referred to as 'vegetables' to underline the difference from the 'human'. People showing characteristics that are seen as not conforming to the 'standard humanity', such as extreme antisocial behaviour or uncontrolled aggression, may be referred to as 'animals', which similarly defines them as somehow not fully human.

When participants at Human Libraries recognise that being different is part of being human they depart from the practice of labelling some people as 'not fully human.'

Readings with Human Books challenge people's notions of who counts as a fellow human being and who counts as a rational agent and, as such, counts as a member of our moral community. The importance that this bears in relation to human rights is articulated powerfully by Rorty (1999, 75):

> For most white people, until very recently, most Black people did not so count. For most Christians, up until the seventeenth century or so, most heathens did not so count. For the Nazis, Jews did not so count. For most males in countries in which the average annual income is under four thousand dollars, most females still do not count. […] [M]ost people are simply unable to understand why membership in a biological species is supposed to suffice for membership in a moral community. This is not because they are insufficiently rational. It is, typically, because they live in a world in which it would be just too risky – indeed, would often be insanely dangerous – to let one's sense of moral community stretch beyond one's family, clan, or tribe.

When Human Books engage Readers in discussions about difference as it relates to being human, they invite them to take the risk of considering how people who are different are most certainly members of the human community.

This counteracts the process of judging who counts as the result of people identifying themselves against what they are not (Rorty 1999). People who engage in this form of judgement do not consider themselves simply as human beings but as a certain sort of good human being and they define themselves against what they are not, which is a particularly bad sort of human being. The discussion above demonstrates this via the examples of (dis)ability and sexuality. Rorty (1999, 78) asserts that it is sentiment rather than reason that provides the most practical possibility of ceasing acts of oppression that are the result of humans defining themselves against what they are not; this is ceasing oppression "out of mere niceness, rather than out of obedience to the moral law." However, the examples provided by the Human Books demonstrate that, in addition to sentimentality, engaging people in critical discussions is a necessary part of reforming the way people judge "the kind of featherless biped that counts as human" (Rorty 1999, 69). The way that Human Libraries advance this process is further informed by considering how Readers engage with difference at Human Libraries.

Readers and Difference

Readers demonstrate how Human Libraries engage people with difference in a variety of ways. Some Readers avoid difference, others want to meet with difference and some reflect on the centrality of difference to Human Libraries.

Difference is a stumbling block for some people to encounter other people. This has been discussed in Chapter 7 via parallel lives and micropublics and the value of Human Libraries that are embedded in public spaces where people stumble upon them (Amin 2002). Some Readers choose their Human Book to avoid reading another Human Book. Readers who do this may reveal day-to-day behaviours of avoiding difference. This was discussed in Chapter 8 via Catie's discomfort with conversations with people with disabilities. However, as that discussion demonstrated, even though Catie avoids difference her participation in the Human Library moved her from a comfortable topic to engage in a discussion about difference.

Readers also attend Human Libraries because they want to meet people who are different and learn from them. Two mothers attended the Willagee Human Library with their children for this reason. Cornelia chose Maxine, a Human Book in a long-term, same-sex relationship

with her partner of 22 years with whom she has two children. Cornelia explains that she made this choice with her eight-year old son, Connor, in mind:

> I really wanted to introduce him to um a gay couple and explore the whole concept that there's different family structures and that they're not good or bad that they're just different so I picked [the] gay book because I thought it would be really quite fascinating for them to explore [the] concept of that there's families with two mums and two dads or there's families with a mum and a dad and so on and so forth.

Cornelia made a very conscious decision to introduce her son to Maxine because she is different. Cornelia explains that her children are used to meeting people in heterosexual relationships and marriages but they are not familiar with people in single-sex relationships. Reading Maxine introduced Connor and his sister to human diversity.

Rachel attended the Human Library because her mother, Regina, saw the Human Library as an opportunity to broaden her two daughters' minds. As a consequence, Regina and one of her daughters, Rachel, arranged to meet Maxine at her home for a reading. Regina had recently experienced a shift in attitude to homosexuality via her job and this influenced her to come to the Human Library:

> We've had some homosexual um people come to speak to us and I've myself found it personally challenging and and stimulating and ah and that has changed my, my my perception towards homosexuality, and maybe I'm imposing on my kids to [laughs] to ah, learn about that as well but good or bad I I just like her to say say talk to a human book.

We recall that when Rachel's friend told her that she was bisexual, Rachel felt very, very awkward. Reading Maxine helped Rachel develop a new understanding of her friend. She reveals this when she explains, "well I thought yeah it's it's okay for her to be bisexual and it doesn't exactly mean that oh, she'll like me or um we will go out together it was mainly like ah, I was mainly it was mainly fear." Reading Maxine helped Rachel confront her fear of difference and gain a greater understanding of how being different is part of being human.

The examples discussed above demonstrate how Human Libraries introduce people to difference and engage them in dialogue about the way difference is part of being human.

Readers meet people who represent particular manifestations of difference and come to appreciate that different types of sexuality, relationships and ability are authentic manifestations of being human. In this way Human Libraries counter the humanist tradition's construction of an ideal of human as "a white, European, adult, male, able-bodied, of above-average intelligence and with a high level of education" (Ife 2010, 71). In doing so they help people develop new notions of who counts as a fellow human being and as a member of their moral community. They encourage people to appreciate difference in a way that rejects the practice of judging who counts by identifying themselves against what they are not and dehumanising what they are not (Rorty 1999). By engaging people in dialogue with people who are different - people they are not – people can be brought to better appreciate that difference is part of being human. This engagement also leads participants to recognise how they share similarities.

Sharing Common Ground

Participants discover common ground at Human Libraries when they recognise that they share similarities. This contributes to their understanding of what it means to be human. Common ground is discovered through the natural progress of a reading. Natalie illustrates this with an example of a Reader who chose a Human Book who is a gay man. During the reading the Human Book explained that he lives in a rural location because he enjoys gardening. This emerged as the common ground shared by Human Book and Reader. After spending some time discussing their shared interest in garden design they returned to discussing what it is like to be a gay man living in Tasmania. This demonstrates how participants recognise that difference and sameness exist within humans. Recognising common ground adds depth and nuances to people's appreciation of what it means to be human and it challenges prejudice and stereotypes. While it is necessary that Human Books help Readers appreciate difference in humans, it is also necessary that they help them appreciate the role of sameness.

Two Human Books demonstrate the role of sameness within being human. Garry discusses how gay male relationships are different to heterosexual relationships but he also introduces Readers to ways in which gay men and other people share common ground. He illustrates this by summarising what he reveals about himself at the start of some of his readings.

I'm 48 years of age I don't have any children I own dogs I have a mortgage I

have a car I have a house I have a job, which lots of people do [...] you explain yourself in the context of what you have that generally everybody else has to show there's only one really major aspect of difference.

Maxine arranged a similar lesson when she welcomed Regina and Rachel to her home:

Jane and the kids weren't here when they [Regina and Rachel] got here but then they came flooded in and said hi and carried on with their night and so all they get to see is the operation of an ordinary household with two, you know two women and two kids.

Rachel reflects on this encounter and observes that it appeared to her to be the same as other families, "very very normal well normal."

Describing Maxine's family as normal is Rachel's way of recognising common ground. Her use of 'normal' raises questions about the relationship between difference and sameness. Rachel and I discuss this:

Rachel: you would think that [...] being a family of two, like women [...] their family structure would be different but it was pretty much the same as, a typical Australian family like this um the kids come home, they talk to their mums say hi go back to their room you know

Greg: mm hmm mm okay, was there anything you thought that was different about what you saw about the family

Rachel: no other than that there was um not a man and a woman but a woman and a woman

Rachel notes the way in which difference and commonality function together. She recognises that Maxine's family does many of the same things as her family and she also observes that it is different to many families because the parents are two women. This brings Rachel to a greater understanding of how difference and sameness exist in humans:

Rachel: I had these preconceived ideas and prejudices against like these certain types of people like I had stereotypes of them and then when you get to talk to them you think okay, you think oh they're like inferior or they're superior or um they're different oh yeah you sort you judge them but then when you get to know them you just

think oh they're the same as me they just have this other thing they do =

Greg: what what's the other thing so they're the same as me

Rachel: yeah

Greg: but they're also

Rachel: but they're different to me

Greg: okay and that difference means what do you think

          [how do you look at that difference

Rachel: [I think it's like individuality

Garry and Rachel each summarise difference as "this one thing" which exists alongside commonality. Rachel knew that Maxine's family is different to most families but Rachel has seen that Maxine's family does many of the things most families do and Rachel recognises that they share commonality.

So far we have considered how readings help people understand that being human is sometimes expressed through difference and is also encountered by sharing common ground. This does not occur in neat compartments; rather, they can emerge together. Gunter, a Human Book from Launceston, illustrates how difference and commonality interact. He is a post-war immigrant from Germany, who worked on the Tasmanian hydroelectric scheme and in the last ten years he has lost his sight and now requires the assistance of a guide dog. Gunter offers an insight into the interplay between difference and sameness by sharing a reading he had with a refugee from an African country:

> [W]e talked about we got common grounds both we are migrants right she came much later than I have but she also found language problems and the custom problems […] ah reason why she left Africa and came out here as a refugee and my reasons so we, the reasons were ah totally different but we both finished up in Tasmania you see that that's a common ground and we exchanged ideas and and ah experiences and of course my ah first experiences here as a migrant 60 years ago are totally different to what it is for a refugee to come in in 2010.

Gunter is alert to the things he and his Reader share in common and he is also very clearly aware of the things that make them different. Recognising the co-existence of difference and

commonality within humans adds nuance and depth to the appreciation of what it means to be human.

In his discussion of the commonalities between human rights and community development, Ife (2010) examines the links between the two terms, 'human community' and 'common humanity.' He regards common humanity as the goal of human rights and argues that "[h]uman rights arise out of a recognition of that common humanity, and statements of human rights are seen as definitions of that humanity that transcend difference and see human rights as universal" (Ife 2010, 129). This link is useful for theorising what is at work when Human Libraries enable participants to recognise that being human includes sharing common ground understood as common humanity. This is possible by drawing on Ife's assertion that human rights arise out of the recognition of common humanity. This assertion is useful for advancing the argument that Human Libraries can introduce their participants to appreciating what we mean by human rights. When Human Library participants recognise that they share common humanity with their fellow participants they demonstrate the potential for Human Libraries to provide a means for bringing people to recognise that human rights arise out of the recognition of community humanity. Furthermore, this potential raises the possibility of using Human Libraries to introduce participants to the way that human rights statements are used to define humanity, seek to transcend difference and are universal.

The argument here is not to assert that these outcomes are already being achieved; rather, it is argued that Ife's link indicates that the fact that participants recognise each other as sharing a common humanity shines light on the potential that exists for Organisers to develop more intentional strategies for helping people to recognise the link between common humanity and the transcendent nature of human rights via participation in Human Libraries. Moreover, such an outcome carries the potential to introduce people to the idea that they can agitate for human rights in a way that is not shackled to their rights as citizens of a particular state. Therefore, when Human Libraries engage people in recognising their common humanity and shared humanity they demonstrate their potential to empower people to reconsider their understanding of what it means to be human. Subsequently, when participants recognise that human rights arise out of sharing common humanity this is a

useful way of inviting them to recognise that human rights transcend difference and are meant to provide universal enjoyment of rights and freedoms.

This can be further progressed via Ife's (2010, 129) argument that the idea of common humanity "encourages people to transcend boundaries of race, gender, culture, ethnicity, age, ability and sexuality." This argument offers a corrective to discourses of difference which emphasise the things that divide humans and ignore the things that unite them. Participants in this study demonstrate how reading at Human Libraries engages them in conversations about common humanity. In expressing their understanding of being human as including both being different and sharing common ground they reveal an understanding of their experience in Human Libraries as a discourse of balance. This resonates with Ife's (2010) argument that while discourses of difference are important, they need to be balanced with discourses of unity. This requires people to attend to the things that unite them and bring them together, rather than focus only on that which separates them. In support of this assertion, Douzinas (2000, 257) outlines the danger lurking around the absence of such a balance:

> In the rhetorical game of rights, similarity and difference on their own can be used to promote the most contradictory objectives. A claim to difference without similarity, can establish the uniqueness of a particular group and justify its demands for special treatment but, it can rationalise its social or political inferiority.

Even with this call for balance, common humanity has its critics. The chief criticism made against common humanity is that it suggests a search for an essential or fundamental humanity which resonates with the philosophy of universal human nature. As is evident in the European humanist tradition, this can result in negative consequences (Ife 2010; Rorty 1999; Donnelly 2007). Ife's (2010) response to this is to replace the term common humanity with shared humanity.

Shared humanity indicates, as is evident in the examples discussed above, that people share commonalities without there being a need to identify a single common human condition that applies to everyone. As Ife (2010, 130) asserts, "[i]t allows for overlapping commonalities discovered in encounters with others, but does not necessarily mean the universal sharing of a single commonality." These overlapping commonalities mean that the concept of shared

humanity promotes an appreciation of what it means to be human that encourages action indicated by sharing. A community that emphasises sharing, values the fact that people will need to take what they need and give what they can. Shared humanity, therefore, recognises the need for this exchange as part of what it means to be human. For Ife (2010, 130), shared humanity acknowledges that people are agents who contribute to a dynamic that "allows humanity to be seen as being constantly reconstructed as part of a multitude of dynamic processes, rather than being held as a static, monolithic, empirical truth." When Maxine, Garry and Gunter engage in dialogue with their Readers about their differences and commonalities, it demonstrates how Human Books and Readers engage in the process of sharing humanity and of reconstructing their appreciation of what it means to be human and therefore, what it means to enjoy rights and freedoms. Sharing humanity continues and gains balance as Human Books embark upon a process of developing their individual identities as humans.

Constructing Personal Identity

Human Libraries help participants appreciate how difference and commonality are part of being human and to critically reconsider their beliefs and attitudes and what it means to be human in light of their conversation with this person. An essential element in facilitating this is the provision of a catalogue of titles and descriptions of Human Books which each Human Book constructs and often reconstructs to express their personal identity.

Many Human Books have had negative experiences throughout their lives as the result of prejudice and stereotypes and they have often been named and described by other people in demeaning or insensitive ways. People volunteer as Human Books because they want to diminish such prejudice. Constructing titles and descriptions is one way of confronting prejudice because it allows Human Books to take control of their personal identities and stipulate how they are to be named and described. In this way it is also a means of expressing what it is to enjoy rights and freedoms as a particular human.

Considering the catalogue of Human Books at the Willagee Human Library helps explain how Human Books construct their personal identity as humans.

Happily Queer (Maxine)

Happy to discuss any questions you may have about what it means to be Homosexual.

Overcoming Adversity (Roz)

An insight into acquired brain injury and how I deal with the new life, new me, that I have had to lead for the last 24 years!

Juggling Life – Making ends meet (Ruth)

A world full of activities with limited time on my hands, I juggle with life's journey and daily work and self-engagement. Coping with the various activities in my life, I have often learned to draw from my inner strength and spirituality as well as reflecting on my resilience that is packed with determination, hard work and perseverance to make ends meet.

Trip to an Island without a Bridge (Pari)

Arriving in Australia and reaching my first home as a married woman. A plane trip with the Royal Flying Doctor. The Australian BBQ.

Guess Who?? (Amy)

Do you remember that game from growing up, where you guess who the opponent is by the way they look? Well I feel like a living version of the game!

People always take a look at me and sum me up based on my age, my hair colour, skin colour/quality, my makeup/clothing, my piercings/jewellery, my chest, my body shape/weight and everything other than who I really am!

Before I've even spoken people think they know me, where I'm from, what I do, how smart or wealthy I am, even if I'm nice or scary?!

But life is not a game, and I have feelings and depth that you may never know about.... unless you ask! Please don't overlook me, come and ask me about who I really am, the answers are likely to surprise you!

These five titles and descriptions illustrate a variety of approaches to being a Human Book and the variety of human rights issues which they can present, such as: gender and sexual minority rights; disability rights; social equality; Indigenous recognition; freedom of opinion and expression. No formula has been followed and no limits have been applied for developing these titles and descriptions. The Human Books name and describe themselves and in doing so indicate, even if not fully intentionally, which human rights issues they present. A consideration of one of the titles illustrates this.

Roz's title and description invites Readers to discuss what it is like to be a person with acquired brain injury. Her title and description allude to how she constructs her personal identity and what it means for her to be a human with a disability. The phrase "new life, new me" captures her approach to living with acquired brain injury which she frames as "uniqueness" rather than disability, focusing on her abilities rather than disabilities. Roz's title and description allow her to present her own personal identity and invite others to discuss what it means.

Connor chose Roz's title and description because of his fascination with what could happen to someone's brain in an accident. Roz explains that she was struck by Connor because "[h]e couldn't see it, that was the best thing […] I just kind of wish people would be more like him." When asked for his reaction to his reading with Roz, Connor responds quite confidently that "[s]he is an interesting person." Denise read Roz with five young adults with disabilities for whom she acts as carer. Denise chose Roz's title and description because the young adults shared common ground with Roz because they experience adversity as a result of disability. Denise shares what she came to realise:

> I think that probably some of our group could do more but then you've got to
> inspire their parents because a lot of the parents wrap them in cotton wool and
> they don't want to let go of the apron strings.

Reading Roz has brought Denise to reconsider the lives of her young adults and how their identities are shaped and managed by other adults due to how they perceive disability. Roz's title and description enable her to engage people in reconstructing their understanding of what it means to be a person with acquired brain injury, what it means to be Roz and what it means to be a human with a disability who wants to enjoy her rights and freedoms. Human Books who continue to volunteer over time reconstruct their titles and descriptions and

develop new titles and descriptions. In doing so they demonstrate how their personal identities evolve and develop over time and highlight the fact that being human is dynamic and an evolving process of becoming more fully human (Freire 1996).[12]

Continued involvement in Human Libraries brings Human Books to reconstruct their titles and descriptions or they construct additional titles and some Human Books use multiple titles. This demonstrates the ongoing construction of their understanding of personal identity. Adrian illustrates how this can occur. He used his first title, *Living without Belief*, to express how he identifies as an atheist and deals with everyday ethical choices. After a period of volunteering as a Human Book, Adrian wanted to take on a title he refers to as "something I struggle with." He constructed a second title, *Walking with the Black Dog*, which he uses to identify his experience of living with anxiety and depression. Adrian explains that constructing his second title was a decision to not shy away from a challenging experience and a topic he wants to confront. Constructing a second title was Adrian's way of expressing his understanding of his personal identity as being broader than his first title expressed and it demonstrates his readiness to confront misconceptions about anxiety and depression which are often applied to people who live with these conditions. Similarly, Theo uses *I am a Tapestry* as a title that represents the fact that he is a man who does embroidery and it also works as a metaphor which indicates the many other parts he recognises within his personal identity; Theo has been a green electrician and he volunteers at a youth detention centre. Adrian's decision to introduce a title regarding his experience of anxiety and depression and Theo's self-description as a tapestry illustrate how Human Books develop in self-understanding, reconstruct their personal identities and express how being human is complex, multi-dimensional and does not fit simple labels or distorting stereotypes. Human Books create their titles and descriptions to help shape their readings and help construct the way their Readers understand personal identity as it relates to being human.

Rachel's desire to find out what it is like for Maxine to be a lesbian led Rachel to recognise and understand Maxine as a human who was born a lesbian and she comes to appreciate that 'lesbian' is not merely a label someone chooses. She expresses it, "[o]h okay so you don't become one you're born lesbian." Rachel's shift in thinking changes how she recognises

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[12] Appendix 1 provides a complete list of all the Human Books included in this study and illustrates how some Human Books use multiple titles and descriptions.

Maxine as human and how she recognises her own humanity. She explains that she came to understand that, "it wasn't wrong to be a lesbian and it's it's okay and that I don't think oh lesbians that's so awkward um I'm more, yeah okay you're a lesbian that's cool we can still be friends." Rachel's experience is echoed in Gunter's reflections on a reading he had with a fellow Human Book who is a gay man. Gunter simply arrived at the conclusion, "you accept him as a human being as a human person."

Precisely because human nature is a problematic term it attracts not only the attention of scholars and theorists but also that of people in their everyday pursuits. When participants in Human Libraries move their conversations to matters related to what it means to be human they embark on the same search as Griffin (2001) and Donnelly (2013). Human Library's main objective is to reduce prejudice and increase respect for difference. As the discussion so far has demonstrated, Human Libraries respond to this by engaging people in discussions about difference as a means of appreciating what human means. This demonstrates how "'[h]uman nature' is a social project more than a presocial given" (Donnelly 2013, 15). Donnelly (2013, 15-16) explains at length how our understanding of human nature as a social project is an essential part of how we understand what it means for humans to have rights and freedoms:

> The relationship between human nature, human rights, and political society is 'dialectical.' […] The essential point is that 'human nature' is seen as a moral posit; rather than a fact of 'nature,' and a social project rooted in the implementation of human rights. It is a combination of 'natural,' social, historical, and moral elements, conditioned, but not simply determined, by objective historical processes that it simultaneously helps to shape.

When people participate in readings at Human Libraries they enter into a constructionist process of understanding what human means. These conversations allow participants to enter into a dialectical process of understanding human nature which, as the basis for human rights, is part of constructing an understanding of human beings. This highlights how humans recognise themselves as historical beings. Freire (1998b, 1996, 1973) offers critical insights into this dialectic and so adds to Donnelly's contribution for understanding how participants construct their appreciation of what it means to be human.

Freire (1996) is preoccupied with human nature because it provides the ground out of which grow theories of socio-political transformation (Irwin 2012). His particular understanding of the human person is "as a maker of history and as one made by history" (Freire 1998b, 115). Within this context he refers to humanisation which he recognises as humans' ontological vocation to become more fully human by pursuing those features which make humans distinct. Central to human distinctiveness is that humans are conscious of themselves as existing within space and time and are capable of thinking creatively which enables them to transform their reality rather than merely adapt to it (Blackburn 2000). As such, humans not only have an ontological vocation but also an historical vocation. Lankshear (1993, 97) notes the significance of this:

> As beings conscious of time, humans can conceive of themselves as incomplete beings. Humans can know that they have been different in the past (individually and generically), that they may become different in the future, and that these changes reflect transforming action by humans upon their world.

Humans, therefore, are conscious of the world in a way that is different to other animals and they see the world as distinct to themselves, as a reality with which they are in relationship. Freire (1973, 3) asserts that "[t]o be human is to engage in a relationship with others and with the world." As conscious and creative beings that can transform their reality and their relationship with the world, humans are able to take the worse and create the better. This applies to the very conditions of their existence and life. Thus the call of human beings to be transforming beings provides them the freedom to be self-creating beings or as Crotty (1998, 150) expresses it, "[t]o ask who human beings are or what it means to be human is to ask what human beings have made of themselves." Human Libraries engage their participants in responding to this question when Human Books and Readers discuss their experiences of being human. In doing so, Human Libraries assist their participants to better understand what is meant by human when people speak of human rights. It is possible to see this intention attract a response when people who take part in Human Libraries start to recognise other humans.

Recognising Humans and Human Treatment

Appreciating what it means to be human brings some participants to recognise what it means to be human and how humans should treat one another. This is demonstrated by Judith as she recalls "me too experiences." She relates an example of a reading with a female Reader in

which they shared personal experiences of abuse and gender discrimination. For Judith, the value of the reading was that "women can understand we're not second rate humans second rate males but we're actually first rate females." During their reading, the women discussed their experiences of abuse and discrimination and recognised their shared identity; a further example of the shared humanity. Central to their discussion was their awareness that they should not have been treated with abuse. Their dialogue is an example of the recognition of shared identity and humanity that occurs in Human Libraries and it also resonates with the understanding of human rights as constructed. The fact that Judith and her Reader recognise that they should not have been abused demonstrates how human rights are fashioned by humans' shared and negotiated knowledge of what it means to be human, how humans expect to be treated and how humans should be treated (Ife 2010). The reading between Judith and her Reader does not simply demonstrate the recognition of the identity of a particular person sitting opposite; it demonstrates how Human Library readings engage participants in a process of recognising what it means to be human and how humans should treat one another regardless of gender or any other differences that exist among humans. This illustrates how Human Libraries invite people to recognise the human in human rights and that "every human being – man or woman, rich or poor, adult or child, healthy or sick, educated or not – holds human rights" and should be treated accordingly (Orend 2002, 15). Judith's 'me too experience' is an example of how Human Libraries help participants recognise humans as holding rights and freedoms which require proper treatment. This is a consequence of face-to-face encounters.

Participants emphasise the impact the face-to-face nature of readings has on them by describing them as humanising a story. Catherine C recognises this in her reading with Sylvie, a Human Book and refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Catherine C has worked in African countries in times of civil war and remarks, "I know she's been through it because this is what actually happened." Catherine C knows the story of civil war in African countries and Sylvie humanises that story in their face-to-face reading. The reading also illuminates the fact that Sylvie as a human who is a refugee and not merely the disembodied image that 'refugee' can conjure. Sylvie sits face-to-face with Catherine C as a human who has suffered unimaginable abuses of her rights and freedoms and as she shares that story Catherine C is invited to appreciate what it means for Sylvie and other refugees to be human and to have the right to seek asylum. In humanising the story of refugees, Sylvie challenges contexts that refuse to acknowledge humans as rights bearers;

such contexts leave refugees wondering at what point they will just be a human who is an Australian rather than a refugee (Fozdar and Hartley 2013).

Each of the participants presented throughout this chapter demonstrates a journey, via a variety of paths, to the same arrival point: recognising the human in human rights. Here we are reminded of the discussion in Chapter 7 of Arendt's approach to human rights which argues that for a life to be fully and authentically human, it must at least include the potential for meaningful speech and action (Arendt 1958). Through these a person is able to both pose and answer the question, "Who are you?" and in so doing reveal who he or she is. Parekh (2007, 758) explains this as a dynamic of belonging:

> Belonging means being able to live within a framework where one is judged according to who and what she is; to be treated as a person based on words and deeds, and not merely membership in a category.

Parekh's interpretation of Arendt, via the idea of 'belonging,' is useful for appreciating how participants engage in the process of recognising fellow humans. Participants' recollections of their readings demonstrate how the method of dialogue enables participants to engage in meaningful speech and action, understood as dialogue, about what it means to be human. As a result of this dynamic any judging that takes place satisfies the criteria of "who and what she is" rather than who or what someone is judged to be; it enables Arendt's (1958, 178) aim of actualising the human condition of plurality, which is "living as a distinct and unique being among equals." Furthermore, participants illustrate how their involvement in Human Libraries engage them with their Readers in ways that bring them to recognise them as humans based on their words and deeds rather than assigning them to predetermined social categories (Parekh 2007).

Rachel's reading with Maxine illustrates this point. By recognising Maxine according to who and what she is as a human, Rachel moves beyond feeling awkward with lesbians and recognises them as distinct and unique humans and potential friends. In addition to this, the way that Sylvie engages with Catherine C through the sharing of her humanising story demonstrates that while human rights are legal entities established by states, they also are a means of expressing how people understand themselves and how they are recognised by others (Parekh 2007). That Maxine and Sylvie are recognised as humans rather than as categories or labels, illustrates how Human Libraries can help to humanise people, who are

categorised as less than human, and enable people to recognise the universality of human rights. This unfolding process of recognition demonstrates that being human is about becoming human. Participants take part in this at Human Libraries when they engage in humanising stories which, given the dialogic dynamic of readings, can be understood as humanising conversations. These conversations fit within the lifelong project of humanisation (Freire 1996).

Humanising conversations fit within humanisation which is the central philosophical concept of Freire's (1996) critical pedagogy. Humanisation is a useful concept for understanding humanising conversations. Freire offers humanisation as a process of becoming more fully human by entering into "critical, dialogic praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Roberts 2011, 14). He considers it to be humanity's ontological, or 'true vocation' – to be human - which is a lifelong process that never comes to full completion. It is an ongoing process of becoming through continual transformation in which to be is to become (McLaren and Leonard 1993; Schaull 1996; Roberts 2011).

Participants engage in readings at Human Libraries as a way of talking to each other on a human level and this is part of how Human Books and Readers recognise each other's humanity. This is indicative of Freire's (1996) assertion that humanisation never occurs in isolation or as the activity of the individual. Humanisation must unfold in the relationships that humans make with one another as they engage with the world (Shor and Freire 1987). Freire (1998b, 58) asserts that "[o]ur being is a *being with*." This highlights the notion that humans' individual existence only makes sense through intersubjectivity. Roberts (2000, 43-44) explains why this is so for Freire:

> The existence of an "I" is only possible because of the concomitant existence of a "not-I," where "not-I" implies both others and world. For Freire, the "we exist" explains the "I exist": "I cannot be," he observes, "if you are not". The "I exist" does not precede the "we exist" but is fulfilled by it. Knowing, on the Freirean view, cannot be a purely individual process but is only possible through dialogue – through a relationship with others, whether this is direct (face-to-face) or indirect (e.g., via texts), mediated by the objective world.

When Human Books and Readers engage in humanising conversations that lead them to recognise each other as humans they are pursuing their ontological vocation of becoming

more fully human. In doing so they echo Gunter's conclusion that "you accept him [or her] as a human being" and they demonstrate how "I exist" is fulfilled because "we exist." Through that process of fulfilment, people recognise what it means to be human and how we should be treated as humans; this underpins the construction of humans as holders of rights and freedoms.

Conclusion

Participants at Human Libraries shine a spotlight on what it means to be human via the process concept of human recognition. That light is cast in four distinct spheres: being different, sharing common ground, constructing personal identity, and recognising humans and human treatment. Participants in Human Libraries recognise that being different and sharing common ground are both part of being human. In embracing difference as part of being human participants challenge the suggestion that some people are "not fully human" and they encourage people to transcend boundaries of race, gender, culture, ethnicity, age, ability and sexuality. This discourse of difference, while important, needs to be balanced with the discourse of unity. Participants engage in this as they come to recognise that they share common ground as part of being human. Expressing this recognition as shared humanity enables people to acknowledge that they share commonalities without needing to identify a single 'common' human condition that applies to everyone. Sharing common humanity acknowledges that people are agents who contribute to a dynamic in which humanity is constantly reconstructed.

Human Libraries also engage people in recognising the human in human rights. This occurs via 'me too experiences.' These are moments of insight, expressed via phrases such as that used by Gunter to explain his response to a gay colleague, "you accept him as a human being." This emerges as participants meet face-to-face in humanising conversations and share humanising stories. These experiences encourage participants to recognise people as humans and not limit them to categories like 'lesbian' and 'refugee.' Via their humanising conversations Human Libraries illustrate the lifelong project of humanisation. This is the process of becoming more fully human; to be human is to be engaged in an ongoing process of becoming human. This dynamic shapes how people recognise human rights and freedoms. When participants in Human Libraries engage in the dynamic of constructing meaning out of the human experiences of difference and commonality and when they engage in the

construction of personal identity, they are able to recognise a human by who and what she or he is rather than who or what someone is judged to be. They assist people in coming to recognise what it means to be human as well as the universality of human rights and how humans should be treated. This is so because they demonstrate that human rights are not purely legal entities provided by states but that they indicate how people understand themselves and recognise others as humans who deserve to be treated as such (Parekh 2007).

Human Libraries encourage people to appreciate that being different and sharing common ground are part of being human and they engage people in constructing personal identity and recognising humans within the context of universal human rights including the way humans deserve to treat one another as a consequence. This demonstrates how Human Libraries engage people in the process of human recognition as a necessary part of challenging prejudice and increasing respect for difference as a means for promoting humans' rights and freedoms.

Chapter 10: Enabling Human Rights Activism

Human Library enacts its method of face-to-face dialogue about difference by engaging volunteers from local communities as Human Books. These volunteers are essential to the Human Library's aim of countering prejudice and increasing respect for difference and human rights. This occurs within a variety of relationships between Human Books, Readers and Organisers. This chapter discusses participants' interpretations of their involvement and activity in Human Libraries and the meanings they make out of it. In doing so, it advances the theory that Human Libraries enable human rights activism.

Activism denotes a multiplicity of positions that sit along a continuum. For example, it can mean anything from the use of education aimed at bringing about social change through to protest and acts of civil disobedience. The meaning that this chapter applies to activism regards it as "direct action contesting or upholding one side of a controversial issue" (Hill 2004, 85). The activism practised by those involved with Human Library is direct action, as one-on-one encounters, contesting the controversial issue of prejudice, which oppresses people's enjoyment of their rights and freedoms in day-to-day life. It adopts this definition mindful that activism includes both the micro (individual) and macro (structural) levels of society (Hill 2004; Gibbs 2002; Pedersen, Fozdar, and Kenny 2012). Given the way in which Human Libraries function, the form of activism that is of particular interest to this chapter is the micro-practice of activism which refers to the actions that people carry out via everyday activities. This can also be referred to as life-world activism (Hill 2004).

Five elements enact the process concept of enabling human rights activism. When participants interpret their involvement in Human Libraries their volunteering is framed in terms of being mobilised into action and as a response to people's desire for knowledge. As participants go deeper into their interpretation of their activity in Human Libraries they describe this in terms of activism and advocacy as well as naming practical outcomes such as raising empathy and challenging misconceptions. These elements represent the meaning that participants construct out of their Human Library involvement and they are useful for understanding the process concept of enabling human rights activism. These themes are also useful for discussing how activism relates to the assertion that "SMOs are important vehicles for promoting social change" (Clement 2011, 123).

Mobilising People into Action

Human Library Organisers assert that Human Libraries mobilise and channel people into action. Mobilising people into action happens when people seize opportunities to act and become visible (Hill 2004). Nathalie illustrates this when she explains how individuals, already interested in promoting diversity and tackling stereotypes as a means of promoting social cohesion, have joined the Launceston Human Library as committee members or Human Books. She explains that their involvement with Launceston Human Library channels their interest into action with people who share their interest in social cohesion. Nathalie explains that "these people have got a similar interest in a way and that, this program [Human Library] has channelled them all." Mobilising and channelling people into action underpins Nathalie's commitment to the Launceston Human Library:

> I think the Human Library you know it's not it's not enough to have a good heart for others […] you know you don't build a world with that I think you just need to be able to move into action and the Human Library primarily puts people together to enact you know this wish for greater understanding, and the way we do it is by, you know through words through, in some cases you know being able to ah see each other look at each other in the eye and you know body language and all these things.

Moving into action means that people who have a good heart about controversial issues in their local community, including prejudice, are able to make their interest visible by seizing the opportunity to act as a member of a Human Library. This puts people together so that they can contest a controversial issue which resonates with comments offered by Sabina and Shauna in previous chapters when they asserted that Human Libraries bring people from diverse backgrounds together for respectful dialogues about difference. Human Books elaborate on these assertions.

Human Books represent a spectrum of motivations for their involvement with Human Library. The spectrum reveals the degrees of intentionality exhibited by those who volunteer as Human Books. Two Human Books indicate the extremes of intentionality. Tamaso is at one end of the spectrum, "I talk about writing and I find that ah, you know potential authors people who write they come and talk to me and we talk about the whole aspect of writing." Angela is at the other end of the spectrum:

> I'm quite passionate around issues around social justice and social inclusion,

um and my particular passions are around um ending racial discrimination and ah gender and sexuality discrimination […] and I know that I'm quite articulate and I'm quite capable of running an argument in a nice kind sharing way so that you know I felt quite confident that whatever would come that I'd be able to have engagement with someone and I thought that I should use that to um basically assist people [in] thinking about their views about people that perhaps in the past they've either never met or they had some fairly stereotype views about so I was kind of putting myself out there cause I thought I could do it.

Tamaso and Angela are examples of how Human Libraries mobilise people into action who have different approaches to being a Human Book. Further analysis of their involvement and that of other Human Books sheds light on how Human Libraries mobilise people into action by enabling them to seize the opportunity to take direct action and contest prejudice by being visible and articulate in one-on-one dialogue (Hill 2004).

Tamaso represents a group of Human Books that I refer to as 'information books.' For example, whereas Tamaso talks to Readers about writing and publishing, other Human Books talk about Filipino culture, solo-yachting and even noxious weeds. This resonates with Ashmore's (2010, 5) argument for adapting Human Libraries and using Human Books as "oral sources of information" which is "the concept of human beings as authoritative and unique sources of information." Tamaso, therefore, provides an opportunity to examine what adapting the Human Library in this way means for its anti-prejudice objectives.

Tamaso does not regard herself as the target of prejudice. Furthermore, she claims, "I haven't found in myself any prejudice because I'm very open to all sorts of people." She illustrates this when she speaks about a conversation with a Human Book, who is a Filipina, who helped her deal with the anger she felt at the collapse of her son's marriage to a Filipina. She regards the conversation as having helped her avoid becoming hateful toward her daughter-in-law and Filipinas in general. She adds further knowledge to this when she explains why she thinks Human Libraries are important:

> I think it's wonderful that people from all aspects of life are there to be spoken to I think it would be very instrumental in breaking down prejudice because somebody who might have set ideas about the Aboriginals or Filipino people or gay people you know all sorts of any other type of people apart from

themselves, and it gives them the opportunity to see life from their point of view.

Tamaso demonstrates several points resulting from her involvement with Human Library. She values and supports the contribution that Human Libraries make by breaking down prejudice and helping people to see life from another person's point of view. Tamaso engages in informal conversations with the other Human Books in ways that help her avoid developing prejudices. This resonates with research on group membership that finds that people who belong to groups that have norms that respect difference will become more respectful by embracing that group's identity (Louis, Barlow, and Greenaway 2012). Furthermore, as an "an oral source of information" she provides an entry point to the Human Library that is not about prejudice. Therefore, offering Tamaso as a Human Book has the potential to attract Readers to the Human Library who may not come with the intention of meeting difference or confronting their prejudice. When such Readers attend the Human Library to read Tamaso they are at least presented with the opportunity to talk to a Human Book who may represent difference or one of their prejudices. We noted this occurrence in previous chapters when Catie took the chance to speak with Roz. Tamaso provides an opportunity to invite people to step beyond their usual micropublics and into an encounter with difference (Amin 2002). Providing Tamaso as "an oral source of information" about writing attracts people from the micropublic of the writing community to attend a Human Library and, once they are there, they are presented with the possibility of moving beyond that micropublic and engaging in dialogue with someone who is different. By mobilising people into action as Human Books, Human Libraries engage people in the critical act of visibility which means that minorities are seen and given the opportunity to take direct action against controversial issues within their communities. The degree to which Human Books are motivated by the personal experience of prejudice is a distinguishing element of variation along the spectrum of Human Books.

Roz acts as a public speaker on acquired brain injury and speaks at schools about her brain injury which is the result of a car accident. This shapes her motivation for being a Human Book:

> I don't think they come in with a prejudice […] I mean it's not a personal attachment they're looking at you as a book, as one with a story or a story or

some fact that they wanna hear about and listen to um, I think it's good because it's getting rid of a lot of that myth of not knowing what what's it about a myth of you know disability.

Roz is motivated by a desire to educate people about disability and to demythologise acquired brain injury. She sees herself as a Human Book who shares knowledge and debunks myths. Other Human Books place prejudice closer to the centre of their motivation.

Some Human Books are the recipients of prejudice and want to challenge prejudice. Two Human Books demonstrate this. Amy relates her response to an invitation to become a Human Book:

I was um particularly drawn to the idea of challenging prejudice in society um I guess growing up having experienced prejudice and continuing to see people experience prejudice and and around me I felt that like strong urge of social justice and said oh this is something that actually I could do.

Robin echoes Amy's response and adds depth to it:

You know prejudice is such a dreadful piece of paranoia that we can better live in the society without it, we might even become a community if we could get rid of that stuff instead of just the society

Greg: […] what was your particular experience of prejudice that led you to

[…] well mental health prejudice has been strong in our in our system for a long time Hollywood has got a lot to answer for their portrayal of of people with mental illnesses has been dreadfully wrong for for decades, the people's impressions of what somebody living with a mental illness is all about is very distorted from reality.

Amy and Robin are motivated by their experiences of prejudice and they are alert to how prejudice functions within communities as a distorting influence. Amy adds a further insight when she states that she thought acting as a Human Book "was actually something that I could do." Acting as a Human Book matched Amy's desire to do something about challenging prejudice with something she believed she could actually do. This demonstrates how Human Library mobilised Amy into action and it demonstrates how it can enable people who have experienced the disabling effects of prejudice to drive efforts aimed at countering

prejudice (Morris 2001). Further along the spectrum Human Books volunteer who already have a practical commitment to anti-prejudice activism.

Human Books with an existing commitment to anti-prejudice activism indicate the opposite end of the spectrum to Tamaso. Garry is an example of such a Human Book. Readers often ask him how living in rural Launceston, as a gay man, compares to living in Sydney. In response, he informs them that in Tasmania, "15 years ago my existence was illegal." He explains to Readers that he and his partner still feel unsafe showing affection in public because they are unsure of the reaction it will attract, "every time we hold hands in public […] you are doing a risk assessment." He explains that "when you point that out to people who don't have to think about that it's quite sobering for them." Engaging Readers in this way is how Garry demonstrates activism as direct action that contests an issue that still remains controversial in many parts of society. He acts against oppressive ideas about homosexuality by contesting those ideas in a visible and articulate manner. He highlights how he practises this when he explains that he has told Readers, "I need you to to walk away from this with a broader understanding of contemporary gay life." The way that Garry demonstrates activism as the practice of contesting wrong ideas that are related to a controversial issue is also demonstrated by Angela.

Angela is a Human Book who is committed to tackling prejudice beyond the personal level and wants to reach the local community. She illustrates this as she recounts a reading with a group of recent immigrants studying English at the local Training and Further Education college (TAFE):

> [T]he teacher had specifically wanted them to sit down and read me as a book
> because there were some very um significant cultural issues around the taboo of
> homosexuality and so she just wanted to draw that out with some of the students
> in a safer environment that she could manage with someone because […] it
> really doesn't bother me what they say you know burn me at the stake it's really
> not gonna fuss me um and that was really fascinating because there was, it it
> was confronting for a lot of the the students who were, were there um and they,
> some of them said very little but it was quite obvious in the body language that
> they found the whole thing confronting I know that's a mean thing to say but it
> was done in a in a respectful environment cause I said look I'm really happy if

you disapprove of me I'm really happy if you think that homosexuality is you know morally wrong or sinful or culturally wrong or whatever, that's fine I can engage with you at that level if you want to […] I'm hoping that at the end of that, that that some of the students might have gone away going, I'd never thought about that.

Angela's description demonstrates how activism, within the Human Library context, is direct action that contests or upholds one side of a controversial issue. She contests the idea that homosexuality is wrong, sinful and something of which people should disapprove. In her role as a Human Book she is mobilised into action and is visible and articulate as she confronts this controversial issue (Hill 2004). Angela also approaches this group as an advocate because she speaks on behalf of homosexual people who encounter disadvantage as individuals and a group. Angela aims to promote and defend the welfare and rights of LGBTIQ people as a group within society.

These examples demonstrate how Human Libraries mobilise a spectrum of people into anti-prejudice activism. They enable people with "good hearts" to become visible and articulate members of minority groups and take direct action to contest controversial issues involving prejudice that is directed at them (Hill 2004). This expression of activism is further appreciated via a discussion of agency (Stammers 2009). Human Books present a diverse range of topics: gender, sexuality, asylum seeking, mental health, (dis)ability, Aboriginality and immigration, among others. When Human Books engage people in discussions about the topics they represent they become actors or agents. Actors can be individuals and also collectives and agency is "the capacity to influence actions and outcomes" (Stammers 2009, 25). Stammers proposes a triadic understanding of agency in which actors, who can be individuals or collectives, and social structures each have potential agency which is "the capacity – the 'power to' – change things" (Stammers 2009, 25).

Agency expresses power via movements when "[p]eople come together, work with one another, create movements and create organisations and institutions because they believe that, collectively, they will have more 'power to' than if they acted separately as individuals" (Stammers 2009, 26). The inherent danger in this is that once such social structures are established they hold the capacity for 'power over' which is "a particular form or manifestation of 'power to'" (Stammers 2009, 26). This illuminates the ambiguities and

complexities of power and highlights the importance of understanding the relationships between actors, agency and structure because they influence social change and social transformation. How we examine and conceptualise this dynamic shapes what we believe is possible and, therefore, what is possible to achieve (Stammers 2009).

When Human Books engage Readers in dialogue about difference they make themselves visible and articulate and contest the way that prejudice impacts on them in their day-to-day lives. In doing so they demonstrate how being mobilised into action is one way that Human Library engages people in the micro-practice of activism as agents. When Garry and Angela engage Readers in dialogue about the treatment of LGBTIQ people they exercise their 'power to' change attitudes and behaviours at the micro-level of society. Such attitudes and behaviours represent the 'power over' which is inherent in the macro-levels of society and are made evident in its social structures. For example, when Garry confronts Readers with the fact that people who are homosexual were marked as illegal and that he still does not feel safe openly expressing his sexuality in public, he illuminates the way that society, both its individual members and its structures, allows prejudice to function as 'power over' the way he enjoys his rights and freedoms.

Practising activism in this manner, Human Books illustrate how they contribute to the pursuit of social transformation, which requires change at the macro-level of society, by contesting controversial issues at the micro-level. In doing so they illuminate the relationship that exists between the micro- and macro-levels of society in the pursuit of social transformation. By contesting controversial issues at the micro-level via conversations, Human Books counter the assumption that people in their everyday lives contribute little or nothing to social change and social transformation; they challenge the notion that ordinary people are "little more than pawns" and "the supporting cast for the 'great men'" (Stammers 2009, 28). The way Garry and Angela function as Human Books demonstrates the activism of "ordinary people in their everyday lives" (Stammers 2009, 27-28). When Human Books respond to the social rejection of diversity and disrespect for difference, they demonstrate how "[a]ctivism begins from an experience of injustice" (Maddison and Scalmer 2006, 208). Their activism illuminates what human rights scholars mean when they assert that "ordinary people – working together in social movements – have always been a key originating source of human rights" (Stammers 2009, 1).

Whereas the Human Library uses its Human Books to focus its transforming efforts on individuals, one conversation at a time, other SMOs pursue a grander objective. For example, Clément (2011, 126-127) studies human rights in Canada through a social movements lens and asserts that "SMOs are important vehicles for promoting social change. […] Grass-roots activism, not the state, was at the heart of the most profound human rights advances in Canadian history." While the Human Library may not pursue such large-scale aims it does contribute to the advancement of human rights at the micro-level of society and it encourages people to consider how the macro-level of society impedes people's enjoyment of their human rights and freedoms by embedding prejudice in its social structures and mechanisms. Human Libraries mobilise people into direct action at the micro-level of society as they use one-on-one dialogues to visibly and articulately contest controversial issues. In doing so they seize the 'power to' act as agents who contribute to social change one Reader at a time. Within this dynamic, Human Books recognise that their agency includes responding to Readers' desire for knowledge.

Responding to a Desire for Knowledge

Human Books perceive that Readers come to them seeking knowledge. As outlined in Chapter 2, Dreher and Mowbray (2012, 26) noted that some Human Books use Human Libraries "as a platform to advocate for the sharing of information around a broad range of issues that are rarely talked about openly." Adrian, Robin, Diane H and Angela explain that Readers come to them to speak about depression, mental illness, eating disorders and homosexuality because they regard them as sources of knowledge.

Maxine demonstrates this via two issues that Rachel raised during their reading: gay promiscuity and same-sex marriage. Maxine recalls that Rachel's "first question was something along the lines that um a lot of people in the community think that homosexual people are quite um promiscuous and that they don't, relationships don't last very long." Maxine shares her response:

> [I] said to her that straight relationships are given enormous amount of scaffolding and support in the in the community so somebody gets engaged they have an engagement party they have all of this things that build up and support and scaffold and and carry this relationship forward and affirm it and witness it and and take the burdens from it and a whole lot and I said, and I've got, um

and that gay relationships get none of it that I've got three sisters my three sisters have all had marriages at my family's expense, they've all ended those marriages and now are working into their next kind of, you know the next generation of relationships [laughs] and Jane and I have been together for 22 years and um we wouldn't have got any of the support that the the others have had, and well we got support there is certainly there is certainly support but it isn't structured and taken for granted that we are affirmed in the same way that straight couples are and that then we're accused of our relationships failing when in fact the support hasn't been provided.

Maxine provides Rachel with knowledge about how homosexual and heterosexual relationships are treated and supported differently within society. Rachel can use this knowledge to reconsider stereotypes that cast all homosexuals as promiscuous and incapable of forming lasting relationships.

Maxine illustrates how the reading allowed Rachel to seek knowledge about gay marriage:

Rachel asked, do you agree with gay marriage yeah so she raised it and I was able to answer it yeah and I've got three sisters who were allowed to marry we're all tax payers we're all citizens of this nation we're all blah blah blah but um, I'm not allowed to marry my partner and I think that that's not right […] if I raised it in too obvious a way that would like evangelism, it would look like indoctrination it would look like propaganda so you'd have to be very careful not to do that.

This Human Library has responded to Rachel's desire for knowledge by enabling her to direct a dialogue. She has gained new knowledge about life as a lesbian, homosexual stereotypes and the issue of same-sex marriage and discrimination against homosexuals.

The knowledge that Rachael gained influenced her beyond her reading. During our interview, one year after Rachel's reading with Maxine, she tells me that she is studying marriage in her religion classes at school. Our discussion unfolds as follows:

Greg: how do you feel about a lesbian couple being married and having a
           family, they can't be married in Australia

Rachel: yeah

Greg: but how do you feel about them living as a permanent couple and then having children

Rachel: um I don't think it's wrong but at the moment my school I go to a Catholic school Catholic all girl school

Greg: yeah

Rachel: and um we're at the moment we're talking about marriage and then gay marriage is often a big topic of discussion within our class it's mainly the girls asking why can't gay marriage be accepted and that was because marriage was meant to be for a girl and a man and they were made to create children and that's the whole definition of marriage a woman and a man which is why it can't be marriage but I think honestly it's okay but I think it's okay but if that's the definition of marriage then it couldn't really possibly happen unless they want to call it like ga garriage or something or

Greg: mm hmm / do you do you =

Rachel: = that would change / that would just change the whole

Greg: okay

Rachel: [you know definition

Greg: [do you accept that definition do you feel comfortable with that definition

Rachel: yeah

Greg: or would you write your own definition of what marriage is

Rachel: honestly I would think marriage is um between two people that love each other

Greg: mm hmm

Rachel: that's my ideal marriage but apparently marriage is between a man and a woman so

Greg: mm hmm according to

Rachel: the dictionary and the Catholic Church

Greg: the Catholic Church yeah, are there, do you think there might be other definitions of marriage

Rachel: not quite sure I haven't really, dictionary [laughs]

Greg: okay

Rachel: I haven't had a look at the dictionary

Greg: good okay good but you've already like shared with me that if you wrote a definition it would be different to the Catholic definition of marriage =

Rachel: = yes it would

Rachel's comments demonstrate the affect that her reading with Maxine has had on her. Her new knowledge about same-sex relationships and marriage has given her the 'power to' develop her own definition of marriage and confront the current institutionalised definition of marriage in Australia. In addition to this, although a year has passed, the reading remains as an influential experience for Rachel. The question that still remains, however, is whether or not Rachel used this knowledge to engage in acts of transformation beyond transforming her own attitudes and behaviours. It did not become apparent during the interview process if Rachel used this knowledge to engage other people in transforming their attitudes to sexual minorities and how they treat people within these minorities. Beyond the experience of individuals gaining new knowledge, there is a wider impact.

Michael, an Organiser at Launceston Human Library raises the way that knowledge is acquired at Human Libraries as a contribution to the anti-prejudice movement:

> [T]he idea behind the program is appealing because um it it fits with folk wisdom you know you walk a a mile in another man's shoes you understand better the neighbour that you chat with over the fences who you might, you know he seems a grumpy old man or you know, a difficult young woman something like that.

Folk wisdom refers to knowledge that draws on real life experiences. The folk wisdom within the Human Library method is akin to the Freirean (1996) revolutionary teaching practice of encouraging the retelling of stories as a means of understanding history as a

living process rather than a set of static facts and dates (Darder 2002). Folk wisdom also resonates with practical knowledge as defined by Maddison and Scalmer (2006, 43):

> It is usually thought to be local, intuitive, and comparatively unreflective. It is concerned with prosaic success, not abstract truth. It does not involve generic propositions ('the nature of contemporary social movements is "x" …'), but case propositions ('we need to try a different kind of demonstration next time around, because "y" …'). It is, overwhelmingly, immethodical and unsystematic.

Essentially, practical knowledge is knowledge that is rendered out of everyday acting and reasoning; it is what people involved with Human Library refer to as its 'common sense' approach. However, the practical knowledge exhibited by people involved with Human Libraries is not unreflective and is more in line with Freire's (1996) concept of authentic knowledge which originates "in the day-to-day transforming moment of human activity" (Roberts 2000, 39).

Drawing on Freire's conceptualisation, practical knowledge can be recognised as passing among activists as they execute various forms of activism. Its interactive nature passes power, as knowledge gained through experience, between activists (McLaren 2002). Human Books employ practical knowledge by drawing on their life experiences to engage their Readers in dialogue as dynamic knowledge production (Darder 2002). Roz shares her experience of living with acquired brain injury to demythologise it as a disability and Maxine passes on knowledge about homosexual and heterosexual relationships and raises awareness of society's discriminatory treatment of homosexuals. In this way, Human Books use practical knowledge as a revolutionary teaching practice that lets Readers "walk in their shoes" and come to recognise how humans' rights and freedoms are diminished.

This use of practical knowledge illustrates that it is not "unthinking common sense" (Maddison and Scalmer 2006, 53); rather, it results from a process of narrative and reflection, also termed praxis (Freire 1996). Human Books engage their Readers in dialogue as praxis and, together, they critically consider encounters with prejudice, stereotypes and difference. Giroux (2011, 155) describes how praxis and practical knowledge intersect:

> [O]ffering a way of thinking beyond the seeming naturalness or inevitability of

the current state of things, challenging assumptions validated by "common sense," soaring beyond the immediate confines of one's experiences, entering into critical dialogue with history, and imagining a future that would not merely produce the present.

Practical knowledge, understood as knowledge that enters the dynamic intersection of meaning creation provided by praxis, is not unthinking common sense; it is the sharing of knowledge that results from action, reflection and the return to action to avoid a mere reproduction of the present (Freire 1996; Blackburn 2000).

Human Books employ practical knowledge in a variety of ways to contest and transform people's ideas about controversial issues related to prejudice. Tamaso explains that Human Libraries offer people an "opportunity to see life from their point of view" and Michael expresses the same sentiment as helping people to "walk a mile in another man's shoes." Angela does this by sharing her life as a lesbian to bring her Readers' discomfort with homosexuality to the surface and to provide knowledge that challenges their perceptions about homosexual relationships. Similarly, Angela invites Readers to reconsider their attitudes and not merely reproduce the present. She demonstrates her intention to use practical knowledge as a way of developing doing and thinking together to encourage a "process of thought and analysis, consideration and review" (Maddison and Scalmer 2006, 52-53). By responding to their Readers' desire for knowledge, Human Books demonstrate how they include agency, within their practice of activism, as the 'power to' challenge 'power over' as it is used in social settings. Human Books demonstrate an agency that uses the practical knowledge they have gathered through everyday life experiences to invite Readers to transform their prejudiced ideas and responses. This agency, however, as has been demonstrated above, also indicates that Human Books are involved in advocacy as well as activism.

Knowledge Providers as Activists and Advocates

The above has discussed how Human Books engage in activism as direct action that contests the controversial issue of prejudice within the micro-level context of one-on-one dialogues (Hill 2004). While the distinction between activism and advocacy is ambiguous, advocacy is used in this discussion to refer to the practice of taking direct action on behalf of members of marginal groups who are not directly engaged in activism (Stone 2009; Hirsch 1993). Some

Human Books demonstrate this because they use their readings as a means of contesting ideas about prejudice on behalf of people who are not involved in Human Libraries. The following discusses how some Human Books demonstrate the overlap that exists between activism and advocacy.

Gerry read Maxine because he desired knowledge:

> Gerry: oh the reason is we have a ah gay person in the family, um our son actually
>
> Greg: okay
>
> Gerry: yeah so I just ah, wanted to talk to somebody and ah, I'd never spoken to, knowingly spoken to other homosexual about my son
>
> Greg: okay
>
> Gerry: so I just wanted to talk to them and see you know, what their views were and what they thought of ah, people, other people
>
> Greg: mm hmm other gay people
>
> Gerry: ah the society in general
>
> Greg: okay
>
> Gerry: the non-gay society and what their expectations were and ah what they wanted us to do to make their lives ah easier

Gerry frames this desire for knowledge using the phrase: "what they wanted us to do to make their lives ah easier." Maxine and Gerry interpret their reading quite differently which illustrates how knowledge functions within readings and how Maxine engages in knowledge provision, not only as an activist, but as an advocate.

The reading between Maxine and Gerry revolves around knowledge of appropriate language. Maxine explains:

> The first question that the guy asked indicated um an attitudinal position in relation to homosexuality that is familiar to us in the lifestyle in the in the um experience and would characterise what we would call homophobia and homophobia is a negative view about homosexuality.

Maxine offers the example of Gerry's use of "those people" to refer to homosexuals as an expression of homophobia. She refers to this as "sloppy language."

Gerry raises the issue of appropriate language in this interview excerpt about what he learnt from his reading:

Gerry: that they're more sensitive than I thought they would be to =

Greg: = is more what

Gerry: sensitive to society's attitude towards them um

Greg: can you give an example of how you understood that or

Gerry: oh things I said ah I was corrected um, I said a few things ah, she pointed out that I was ah, that's it, that's what people find insensitive, gays find insensitive

Greg: oh okay

Gerry: for instance I think I said ah, yeah in the course of the conversation I said ah um, what do you want normal people to do so, while she didn't take any objection to that word normal, it was seen as the, that I was meaning the gays were abnormal

Greg: okay

Gerry: which was not my ah intention or ah I used the word normal just to describe non-gay people

Greg: yes =

Gerry: = I should have said non-gays

Gerry interprets Maxine's response to his use of "normal" as an indication that "they're more sensitive than I thought they would be." Later he states, "even though you mean nothing even though it is quite harmless they can take out the worst out of it." Gerry's description of his reading demonstrates that he has concluded that people who are gay are more sensitive rather than his use of language is inappropriate.

During our interview, Maxine explains what Gerry's "sloppy language" means to her as a Human Book:

> I think the language was in relation to um his son's partner, and he didn't want to use that, he didn't want he kind of got to that word and then he said you know yes I think that's you know what he wants to be called or something and so there's 'partner' there was a couple of things and and it was, it just struck me that his refusal to integrate the language fluently into his his vernacular indicates that he wants to still stay in the space of non-acceptance if he wants to still be seen as somebody who's, hasn't come across in full support, but you know his language would demonstrate that cause language demonstrates that you've adopted a new kind of concept you've adopted a new vernacular that reflects an ideology and in this case the ideology is acceptance of homosexuality is a natural um a naturally occurring thing within human species.

Maxine regards Gerry's inability to use 'partner' when he talks about his son's relationship as indicating that he remains "in the space of non-acceptance" of homosexuality as natural. For Maxine, Gerry's language demonstrates his non-acceptance of his son as a homosexual.

Maxine explains how, during the reading, she consciously situates herself in the position of advocate:

> [A]nd so I'm [laughs] in a position of greater empathy with the son, I'm feeling this, I'm feeling for the boy [laughs] which is also part of the motivation of my, you know my involvement my involvement is to [make] it the world a softer place for people to come out in and so I was doing my best for his son [laughs] by trying to help him in my way which is you know it was a curious experience.

Maxine's curious experience is her attempt to raise Gerry's knowledge of the importance of language as an expression of prejudice and discrimination. As an activist she engages in direct action to contest language that carries prejudice and she also adopts the role of advocate because she acts on behalf of Gerry's son and people who identify as members of sexual minority groups. Maxine acts in this way with the aim of making the world a softer place in which people who are gay can live openly.

During our interview Gerry demonstrates an increase in his knowledge regarding language, illustrated by an increased awareness of how his son reacts to his language, "I find this expression on his face I said what's happened now what have I done so now I know that it is." As a result of his reading with Maxine, who has advocated on behalf of Gerry's son, Gerry appreciates why his son shows offence at the things he says. Gerry may not be at a point where he fully appreciates why his language offends his son but his reading with Maxine has helped him shift to a point where he recognises, somewhat ambiguously, that his language does offend. Additionally, although Gerry speaks about his reading in ways that reveal ambiguous outcomes, he states that his experience has been positive and that he would read a Human Book again, especially on the topic of being the parent of a person who is gay.

The recognition of the ability of language to express prejudice demonstrates how it distorts the way people are treated. For example, Gerry struggles with using 'partner' when speaking with his son about his same-sex relationship. This also indicates his reticence to fully recognise the sexuality of his son and his partner as well as their relationship. Robin refers to how films distort how people living with mental illness are recognised. Angela, Maxine and Garry describe the lack of recognition social structures provide to lesbians and gay men. Diane H lacks appropriate recognition when people dismiss her eating disorder as "crazy." Amy uses her title, *Guess Who?,* to encourage Readers to discuss how she recognises herself as a woman who embraces her Aboriginality, which some members of her family deny. As advocates, Human Books use their direct action to contest prejudice on behalf of others for the appropriate recognition of people.

Recognition influences how people enjoy their rights and freedoms and is part of addressing persisting social problems (Maddison and Scalmer 2006); Ackerly (2011, 230) asserts that "the struggle for recognition as a rights-holder is the primary rights struggle." In *Activist Wisdom* (2006)*,* Sarah Maddison and Sean Scalmer provide examples that add to those provided by Human Books and illustrate what is meant by appropriate recognition. For example, Happy Ho discusses her activist work seeking appropriate recognition of Asian lesbians and gay men and explains that they were considered "exotic or strange" and that "[w]e were never seen as real people" (Maddison and Scalmer 2006, 190).

Maddison and Scalmer (2006, 189) present a second example of appropriate recognition:

> Jackie Huggins argues that the invisibility of Aboriginal women in struggles for Indigenous rights has contributed to the high level of family violence in some Indigenous communities. Huggins argues that it was only when high-profile male activists such as Mick Dodson spoke of family violence that it was appropriately recognised by mainstream political leaders.

Happy Ho and Huggins illustrate the impact of appropriate recognition on rights activism and advocacy. The absence of appropriate recognition makes invisible and silences individuals and groups. As Human Books talk to their Readers about their mental illnesses, eating disorders, same-sex relationships and Aboriginality, they step out of the invisibility and silence imposed by inappropriate recognition. As they become visible and articulate they illustrate the assertion that "individuals and groups must demand recognition for themselves if society is to have any hope of taking their claims on board" (Maddison and Scalmer 2006, 191). Appropriate recognition unveils human diversity as well as the tensions that lay therein.

Diversity within social movements carries positive qualities but it is also a source of tension. It also highlights how appropriate recognition requires an appreciation of intersectionality and cross-issue awareness (Ackerly 2011; Valentine 2007). Activists describe the inherent tension between recognition and diversity as an experience of being pulled by opposing forces. This results from their efforts to pursue the competing recognition claims that function within their own lives and the movements to which they belong (Maddison and Scalmer 2006). Aboriginal women face the challenge of recognition of racial *and* sexual oppression. Lesbian and gay men who are Asian are pulled between sexuality *and* culture. These examples demonstrate how intersectionality indicates how the enjoyment of rights' holders' rights is interrelated; "no person's rights are enjoyed and secure if perceptions and norms create the conditions under which some persons are not perceived as rights holders" (Ackerly 2011, 230). Activism for appropriate recognition needs to remain alert to the issues of intersectionality and cross-issue awareness if they are to advance the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms.

Human Books shed light on the intersectionality of rights enjoyment and cross-issue awareness. They do this when they construct titles and descriptions that express their

diversity made evident by their personal identity. Gordon does this using the title *Two Many Mothers* which deals with being an adoptee. Instead of using multiple titles, Gordon uses 'chapters' which open up other topics in response to Readers' interests. One of Gordon's chapters is about his life as a gay man. Gordon uses his different chapters as a means of introducing his Readers to appropriate recognition and intersectionality. This example will be discussed in greater detail below. Gordon demonstrates how being a Human Book enables him to gain appropriate recognition as a person who is both an adoptee and a gay man and to step out of the invisibility and silence imposed when people and society try to ignore these elements of his humanity. In doing so the Human Library provides a method that avoids the pitfall of essentialism, which diminishes people to a single category, inherent in other anti-prejudice strategies (Kowal, Franklin, and Paradies 2013). Similarly, Maxine invited Gerry to discuss how language distorts the way people are recognised. This came as a result of feeling empathy for his son. Readers speak about the impact that empathy has on them during readings.

Raising Empathy

Catherine F reflects on her experience of empathy while reading Sylvie:

> Well I think um yeah it's really great having her as a Human Book because people will um have more empathy for asylum seekers if they meet a um person face-to-face and hear about their story.

This resonates with the discussion in the previous chapter regarding humanising stories and conversations. I invite Catherine F to consider her opinion in relation to the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers by Australia over the last several years:

> [Y]ou know um a lot of people say that they should stay in their own country and um try to improve it but she told me the story about how it was impossible for her to be in her country and I mean she's, you know, saw the killing of so many members of her family and the political situation there is really bad still so mm yeah you couldn't um hold these views.

As a result of reading Sylvie, Catherine F expresses the conviction that listening to Sylvie's experience as a refugee raises empathy in Sylvie's Readers and helps unsettle the view that asylum seekers should stay in their own countries. Her conviction demonstrates the belief that intergroup contact that enables people to share and appreciate another person's feelings

is an effective way of reducing prejudice (Gaertner and Dovidio 2005; Kenworthy et al. 2005; Hodson 2011; Swart et al. 2011; Todd et al. 2011). Her judgement regarding the possible impact that reading Sylvie would have on Readers resonates with studies that have found that increasing empathy and taking perspective of outgroups increases positive evaluations of outgroups (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008).

Catherine F's reaction to reading Sylvie is not an isolated incident. I read Sylvie during my fieldwork in Launceston. Reading Sylvie is emotionally confronting. This is enhanced by the way she shares her story; she is very open, very honest and very gentle even though the content of her story includes numerous incidents of utter brutality and inhumane treatment. My reading with Sylvie left me feeling emotionally numb but it also raised in me a great respect for her as well as a greater knowledge of her experience as a refugee and what it must be like for other refugees. Sylvie uses "practical knowledge" to relate her escape from the DRC to raise empathy for asylum seekers (Maddison and Scalmer 2006). It raised my empathy for refugees and left me with the same conviction as Catherine F, that more Australians should know the tragedy that refugees experience and why they seek asylum in other countries, including Australia. Another reading further demonstrates how readings raise knowledge and empathy in Readers.

During my interview with Dianne W, she is able to retell Sylvie's story about her escape from the DRC to a refugee camp in Uganda in detail. Here she shares the impact of that story:

> [S]he found that the telling quite painful I think and upsetting, um but I think it she felt that it was um helping her and certainly I found it um very very interesting I hadn't encountered anyone before I hadn't actually spoken to someone who had come here as a refugee before and um I was really very very interested in her story and felt very much for her and felt probably that um there's probably a lot more people out there like her that, that need to be assisted and helped to um come to our country.

Hearing Sylvie's story raises Dianne W's empathy for Sylvie and other refugees. She describes her response using the terms "interest" and "feeling" and I ask her if reading Sylvie has changed her attitude to refugees and asylum seekers.

> [M]m yes I guess it did because as I've said I haven't had, I haven't experienced or haven't met anyone who um has been a refugee who has come to this country um you hear a lot in the press you read a lot and um I found that um I guess it did help me to understand more that there are a huge number of people who are genuine refugees and that we should be doing more um to bring them and settle them in our country, the genuine ones yes it did help me to understand a lot more speaking with her.

The discussion in Chapter 7 about spaces of rights and freedoms demonstrated how Human Libraries provide people like Dianne W with opportunities to meet people they have not previously met and spoken with, such as an asylum seeker. Until now, Dianne W's source of knowledge about asylum seekers has been the press. In this space of rights and freedoms Dianne W meets Sylvie as a new source of knowledge who acts to raise Dianne W's empathy for asylum seekers and to appreciate that there must be a huge number of asylum seekers whom she believes should be helped to settle in our country.

Dianne W continues to speak of her reading and considers it in light of Australia's current political climate and its treatment of asylum seekers arriving by boat:

> [Y]ou know I'm glad I've had the opportunity to understand a little bit more about what's making them get on that boat and do it and I think, even though she didn't come that way I think it's sort of helped open the door a little bit to help me understand and I'd like to understand a little but more about it.

The knowledge and empathy that Dianne W has gained from Sylvie about refugees has provided her with greater knowledge and it has given her a desire to understand more about asylum seekers.

Responding to Dianne W's experience of reading Sylvie and the points she has made regarding Australia's current political climate, I ask if the knowledge she has received would change the way she responds to people who use the term 'boat people':

> I think I would say I think I understand or I do understand now a lot more why um they're prepared to risk their lives to come here, the majority of them I still, you know I I still think at this stage there are the odd ones who are not genuine refugees but I think the majority of them are um so yes I I would go into

discussion with someone you know saying that I felt that they were um had a
desperate need to try and get to Australia.

Learning about Sylvie's experience as a refugee has increased Dianne W's empathy for asylum seekers by raising her awareness of the desperate needs of refugees. Her new knowledge challenges other sources of knowledge, such as the press, and it has resulted in her wanting to know more and to read other Human Books who are refugees and asylum seekers. Finally, this experience has made her feel more confident about responding to bias and explaining why people seek asylum in Australia. This raises the question of whether or not Dianne W has acted on this feeling and responds to bias in a more confident way when she encounters it. The interview took place about two weeks after Dianne W had read Sylvie and so it is not possible to present any finding in response to that question. It offers a possible avenue for further research. Dianne W's feeling of confidence also raises the issue of challenging false knowledge.

Challenging Misconceptions

Readings are a process of challenging participants' misconceptions. Challenging misconceptions and raising empathy reverberate with findings presented by two of the other studies of Human Library. Kudo et al. (2011, 4) report that Dokkyo Human Library produced "increased knowledge, understanding and empathy of the readers," demonstrated by "an awakening of new values and broadening of perspective." Dreher and Mowbray (2012, 47) note that Human Books assert that they address common misconceptions and "set the record straight." Other studies into intergroup dialogue strategies report similar findings. They demonstrate that increasing knowledge and reducing the acceptance of myths reduce prejudice (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008; Pedersen et al. 2011; Pedersen, Fozdar, and Kenny 2012). This is made evident in the form of improvements in intergroup understanding (Wayne 2008) and changed feelings and greater acceptance in participants (Dessel 2010). The above discussion of empathy and this discussion of challenging misconceptions add further knowledge to these previous findings and are useful for appreciating how Human Library informs us about how people can challenge prejudice and increase respect for difference as a means for promoting humans' rights and freedoms.

Gordon challenges misconceptions using the title *Two Many Mothers* which deals with being an adoptee and uses 'chapters' that open in response to Readers' interests. One of Gordon's

Readers chose him because the Human Book he had intended to read was not available. As a result of the dynamic of the reading, the chapter on Gordon's life as a gay man was opened which gave Gordon the opportunity to challenge misconceptions about gay men:

Gordon: he thanked me at the end of the reading um for ah opening up new ideas to him because he'd always had a closed mind on homosexuality and even though that wasn't the real thrust of my book, it was a chapter, and he opened that chapter, so someone came along with no plans on ah being turned into a homophile instead of a homophobe that's ah more or less what happened […] he he very very expressly verbalised that

Greg: okay did he say what it was what his previous assumptions or =

Gordon: = only only that ah he'd a very negative view and ah it was mainly you know party queens at the Mardi Gras and ah we're we're all rather shallow and promiscuous and all had AIDS

Greg: and when he left what do you think he may have thought

Gordon: well he realised that we weren't all drug-fucked party queens

Greg: [laughs]

Gordon: ah I must admit to having been one of those occasionally [laughs] but no he he he left realising that um gay people are as much a part of the community as he was and ah that our lifestyle is probably just as valid even if it wasn't for him

This echoes a number of assertions made throughout this thesis and demonstrates how Human Libraries can reach their anti-prejudice objectives. As was the case with Rachel and Maxine, Gordon's Reader is able to discuss stereotypes applied to homosexuals. Due to the fact that the Reader's desired Human Book was not available, Gordon reached a person whom he would otherwise not have met for a conversation about being a gay man. Gordon challenged his Reader's misconceptions, increasing his respect for difference, and brought him to appropriately recognise him as a gay man who is a fellow-member of his local community. The following discusses what it means when Human Libraries enable people to raise knowledge and empathy and challenge misconceptions. It does this by drawing on the concepts of creative social praxis and expressive activism.

Creative social praxis indicates Stammer's (2009, 33-34) contention that "through innovative creativity in ideas and practices (understood together as praxis) social movements contribute significantly to the shaping of historical developments." He argues his contention by drawing on Piotr Sztompka's (1990) reformulation of the idea of progress and social transformation which recognises "that social structures and historical processes are the outcome […] of everyday practices, of human actions undertaken by individuals, collectives, groups, classes, movements" (Sztompka 1990, 248). For Sztompka (1990, 249), the core meaning of progress is "the potentiality for becoming." This meaning values progress as a process which emphasises achieving, striving and quest, rather than a view that values progress as completion which emphasises achievement, attainment and finding. At the core of this is human agency, which was discussed above as part of the way in which Human Libraries mobilise people into activism. Sztompka's reconceptualisation values a constructionist approach to progress and turns our attention "towards the real socialised individuals in their actual social and historical contexts, and the moving force of change – the agency – is located in their normal everyday social activities" (Sztompka 1990, 250).

When Human Books raise knowledge and empathy and challenge misconceptions, we witness the way in which Human Libraries are a moving force for change via people's everyday activities. It illuminates the relationship between social change and social relations as well as agency:

> The agency is finally humanised and socialised at the same time. Common people are brought back into the picture and acquire truly human size: as aware but not omniscient, powerful but not omnipotent, creative but not unconstrained, free but not unlimited (Sztompka 1990, 250).

Human Libraries bring 'common' people back into the picture, where they acquire truly human size, as they strive to be recognised as humans with rights and freedoms by raising knowledge and empathy and challenging misconceptions. In this way, Human Libraries express "the potential for the creative social praxis of social movements […] as important agents of social transformation and as sites of innovation, creativity and knowledge production" (Stammers 2009, 37).

When Human Books and Readers produce knowledge and empathy during readings, it is an example of Melucci's (1989, 1996a) metaphor of social movements as laboratories. This

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metaphor indicates how social movements resist hegemonic understandings of the world by experimenting with creative and innovative ideas and practices that challenge these dominant understandings (Stammers 2009). This resonates with Freire's concept of problem-posing education. It indicates the way "people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world and *with which* and *in which* they find themselves" (Freire 1996, 64). The result of problem-posing is that people cease seeing the world as a static reality and they come to understand that it is in a continual process of transformation. Problem-posing, like creative social praxis, provides the laboratories of social movements with the necessary instruments for critical thinking (Irwin 2012). Situated within the anti-prejudice movement, the Human Library Organisation operates within this laboratory and enables those who enter into it the opportunity to use problem-posing and creative social praxis to work for the transformation of prejudice which results from false knowledge.

Building on creative social praxis, Stammers (2009, 228) offers what he terms an "indicative account" of the construction of creative human rights praxis. A key part of this account is that it focuses on "the expressive dimension of human rights, both in terms of the empowerment of the oppressed and in terms of reconstructing local and global cultures of human rights that are fully embedded in the institutional and everyday worlds" (Stammers 2009, 228). For Stammers (2009, 228), focusing on the expressive dimension of human rights "provides some quite different ways of thinking about the 'is' and 'ought' of human rights." Central to this is the functioning of 'power over' and 'power to.' The micro-level and dialogic elements of Human Libraries demonstrate an approach to creative human rights praxis contestation that favours 'power to' and challenges the dominance of 'power over.' They do this as Human Books demonstrate their power to raise knowledge and empathy and to challenge misconceptions of what it means to be a human with rights and freedoms and how these are often not enjoyed by people in their everyday lives.

Readings presented throughout this chapter demonstrate how Human Books exercise 'power to' using everyday language at the micro-level to engage in the social contestation of the right to enjoy human rights (Roberts 2000). This is made evident by interpreting some of the examples presented throughout this chapter. For example, when Garry tells Readers he feels unsafe as a gay man in Launceston he contests the way in which his social context, including people's prejudice, impedes his enjoyment of "the right to life, liberty and security of

person" (United Nations 1948, Article 3). As Sylvie recounts her eight-year struggle to escape the DRC and gain asylum in Launceston she not only highlights and humanises the importance of "the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution" (United Nations 1948, Article 14) but she contests the assertion that refugees should stay in their own country. Maxine explains to Rachel that she cannot marry a person of the same sex and contests the fact that she does not enjoy the same rights as her heterosexual sisters and that they are not "equal before the law and […] entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law" (United Nations 1948, Article 7). When Human Libraries provide opportunities for people in their everyday lives to have conversations about difference, which they often never have because social convention disapproves of certain topics or names them as taboo, they contest "the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference" (United Nations 1948, Article 19). In this way Human Libraries demonstrate how people struggle to bring to life the modern human rights language and the universal principles they enunciate in the local context (Clement 2011). By engaging people in its micro-level dynamic, Human Library enacts creative social praxis as a means of challenging misconceptions and advancing people's enjoyment of their rights and freedoms at the level of the local community. Further consideration of expressive activism contributes to our appreciation of how Human Libraries challenge misconceptions as part of enabling human rights activism.

It has already been noted that social movement activism includes expressive and instrumental dimensions. Expressive and instrumental activism are both necessary and important but because Human Libraries are an example of expressive activism, the following limits its discussion to this (Maddison and Scalmer 2006).

This research embraces Stammers' (2009, 164-165) explanation of expressive activism:

> Expressive activism is oriented towards the construction, reconstruction and/or transformation of norms, values, identities and ways of living and being. It is not just about 'who we are' […] but also about 'how we are' in the world, consequently requiring evaluation of 'what we do' and 'how we do it'.

The expressive dimension of movement activism, therefore, can be focused inwards and outwards. Its inward focus aims to legitimate social movement actors' position, values, outlook and identities. Its outward focus projects alternative norms, values, identities and

ways of living and being beyond the movement and into the context in which it is situated. It does so to gain acknowledgement and recognition of the alternative ways of living and being (Stammers 2009). Thus, by posing alternatives and asking questions about the societal contexts in which they exist, social movements are an important means for avoiding the paralysing effects that result from what is often accepted as neutral social and institutional procedures (Melucci 1989). As such, without social movements' contribution of expressive activism, societies would be incapable of praxis: synthesising refection, action and political practice informed by reflection (Aronowitz 1993).

These explanations resonate with the expressive efforts of Human Libraries, presented throughout this thesis, which use difference as a means of communicating with the mainstream and posing difficult questions about "who we are", "how we are," "what we do" and "how we do it" (Stammers 2009). For example, Chapter 9 discussed how Human Books pose such questions by constructing and reconstructing their titles and descriptions to present their own identities. In this chapter, Angela and Diane H expressed how they challenged their own prejudices as the result of readings and demonstrated how expressive activism is directed inwards and outwards. Their inward encounters, as an outcome of engaging with their Readers, echo Freire's (1996) critical pedagogy which stresses the need for activists to "disown the prejudices they may have been raised with" and to exercise their activism with "love, respect and humility" (Margonis 2003, 154-155). Maxine's reading with Rachel about same-sex marriage supported Rachel as she asked questions about how institutions define marriage. Finally, Sylvie's confronting story of escape from the DRC communicated with the mainstream and posed difficult questions about Australia's response to asylum seekers. These examples illustrate Human Libraries' use of expressive activism as a means of challenging people's norms and values one conversation at time.

Via this means of expressive activism, Human Libraries offer an example that challenges the binary polarity that some activists establish between expressive and instrumental activism. Stammers (2009, 166) argues that these dimensions "need to be understood as usually being in a dynamic and complex relation" and not a binary polarity. However, it is worth noting that this polarity can occur when activists feel pressured to produce immediate results and demonstrate tangible change. Maddison and Scalmer (2006, 69) illustrate how proponents of instrumental activism can bring pressure to bear on expressive activist colleagues:

> [A]ctivists want refugees out of detention; they want an end to Australia's involvement in the war on Iraq; they want to improve the living conditions and life expectancy of Indigenous Australians; they want women to be safe from violence; they want an end to logging of old growth forests; they want lesbian and gay families to have legal and social standing alongside heterosexual families. These and other goals are all important, and for every day that they remain unachievable, people (or the planet) will suffer. The need to work towards these instrumental ends is clear.

For activists who favour this approach, other forms of activism appear to be a waste of time and self-indulgent and they ask: "[e]xpressive protest, cultural activities, symbolism and ritual – what place do these have in the strategies of social movement activists" (Maddison and Scalmer 2006, 69-70)?

These tensions demonstrate how binary approaches to human rights activism are counter-productive. It invites an alternative approach to the pursuit of human rights which nurtures a dynamic relationship between expressive and instrumental activism. Maddison and Scalmer (2006, 84) draw on the wisdom of activists and assert that "[r]eal and lasting political change cannot be achieved unless the culture – people's values, beliefs and opinions – is changed along with it." Human rights activism requires a suite of approaches to change people's values, beliefs and opinions so that these may produce people who are committed to bringing about lasting social change. Citing Young (1997), Maddison and Scalmer (2006, 86) argue that "[t]o achieve lasting change, what is needed is 'a variety of strategies of resistance', which may be 'pursued simultaneously' by different groups or networks within a social movement." Human Library offers its micro-level strategy of resistance, practised as direct action that contests prejudice, as a contribution to such a suite of approaches as it engages people in expressive activism and challenges misconceptions that impede people's enjoyment of human rights and freedoms. Via this means of expressive activism, Human Libraries enable human rights activism.

Conclusion

Participants' responses in their interviews indicate that Human Libraries enable human rights activism in five ways: mobilising people into action; responding to a desire for knowledge;

providing knowledge as activists and advocates; raising empathy; and challenging misconceptions.

Human Libraries enable people to take on the role of Human Book and to seize the opportunity to engage in direct action that contests prejudice. It enables people who have experienced the disabling impact of prejudice to drive anti-prejudice efforts (Morris 2001) and, by identifying as a member of a group defined by norms that respect difference, to continue to become more respectful of difference (Louis, Barlow, and Greenaway 2012). Human Books respond to people's desire for knowledge by drawing on practical knowledge (Maddison and Scalmer 2006). Readers' gain increased empathy and are able to engage in perspective taking which they demonstrate by describing their reading Human Books as walking in someone's shoes (Pedersen, Fozdar, and Kenny 2012). Through dialogue, people talk about what this means and engage in praxis, as the process of reconsidering how prejudice inhibits people's lives (Freire 1996). The use of practical knowledge to foster dialogue illuminates the way Human Books identify themselves and introduces Readers to how recognition acts to impede or enhance how a person enjoys their rights and freedoms. Functioning within the structure of the Human Library Organisation, Human Books and Human Libraries can be understood as acting as agents for social change and as contributors to the context of human rights. Via the method of one-on-one dialogue, Human Libraries mobilise people into micro-level activism.

Human Libraries operate within the anti-prejudice movement, which can be appreciated as a laboratory of creative social praxis aimed at confronting dominant understandings based on prejudice (Stammers 2009; Melucci 1989, 1996a). Within this laboratory, Human Libraries serve as a form of expressive activism, which is oriented towards the construction, reconstruction and transformation of norms, values, identities and ways of living and being. Human Libraries express activism via dialogues about difference and, in so doing, represent one organisation's anti-prejudice response to the need to challenge people's misconceptions (Wayne 2008). By engaging people in the task of challenging misconceptions, Human Libraries enable human rights activism. Human Library mobilises people into action and allows them to take on the roles of activist and advocate as they raise knowledge and empathy and challenge misconceptions. By enabling human rights activism Human Libraries engage people in the process of human recognition as a necessary part of challenging

prejudice and increasing respect for difference and as a means for promoting humans' rights and freedoms.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

The Research Question, its Thesis and Paradigm

This thesis research project commenced by acknowledging that the societal reality of living with difference is unavoidable and that how we live with difference shapes the ways that people are treated and the extent to which they live lives that are worthy of humans. As a means of responding to this, the primary question was: What does an examination of Human Library inform us about how people can challenge prejudice and increase respect for difference as a means for promoting humans' rights and freedoms?

In addition to this central question, the research focused its attention on a particular manifestation of the societal reality of living with difference, namely the dehumanising influence of prejudice and stereotypes and how these impact upon people's everyday lives. Therefore the thesis commenced by outlining an understanding of prejudice, stereotypes and human rights enjoyment. Prejudice is applied as an overall negative attitude toward people and the group(s) to which they belong (Eagly and Diekman 2005). A significant means of applying these negative attitudes is the use of stereotypes to label people with exaggerated beliefs to justify (rationalise) people's conduct in relation to those groups. Stereotypes provide those who use them a required justification for their negative beliefs and attitudes (Allport 1954/1979). Finally, the way in which prejudice and stereotypes are created and function within communities demonstrates that human rights can be understood as struggle concepts that emerge in the everyday lives of people who suffer marginalisation rather than originating in philosophy or law (Stammers 2009). People who engage in the struggle of countering prejudice demonstrate the importance of human rights activism committed to the long-term goal of promoting the rights enjoyment of all. This also reminds us that legal entitlements do not equate to rights themselves because these are only realised by making real their enjoyment (Ackerly 2011).

The research project views its question through the lens of constructionism. It views human rights not as givens, but as the product of human social interaction, including the imbalances and imperfections therein (Short 2013). This view of human rights influences how the research focuses on the ways that people actively pursue and promote the enjoyment of

human rights within the context of everyday life; it is in this context that human rights are continually being "negotiated, defined and redefined at all levels of society" (Ife 2010, 76). This magnifies the micro-level encounter of human rights enjoyment as fashioned by humans' shared and negotiated knowledge of what it means to be human, how humans expect to be treated and how humans should treat one another (Ife 2010; Stammers 1999; Miller 2010; Waters 1995).

This micro-level encounter is situated within the Human Library Organisation that functions within the anti-prejudice movement. Human Books' contribution is to carry the movement's ideas of confronting prejudice and stereotypes and increasing respect for difference into their local communities. Within the social movement context, Human Libraries engage people in confronting prejudice and they demonstrate how social movement organisations can focus attention on oppression that has been erased from the stories of the powerful, including individuals, groups and societies. Functioning as a dynamic within people's everyday lives, Human Libraries demonstrate how social movement struggles are at the heart of human rights and the advancement of their enjoyment at the micro-level of society (Stammers 1995, 1999, 2009).

The Existing Knowledge and Knowledge Gaps

Having established these fundamental elements within the research project, the thesis turned its attention to the existing body of literature produced by research about Human Library and its background of development. In doing so it noted the existing knowledge as well as the gaps in knowledge regarding what Human Libraries do. The knowledge offered by this literature indicated cues for this research project and invited it to contribute new knowledge. The following summarises the areas, indicated by the existing research about Human Libraries, examined by this research project.

The existing research called for further examination of Human Library in a number of areas. These include the assertions that Human Library is adaptable and challenges knowledge; that it raises self-awareness; encourages attitudinal change; and that it has been difficult to evaluate. Rendall's (2009, iii) evaluation of the National Implementation Strategy by Living Library Australia indicates these gaps in knowledge when she states that participants

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"believe the experience has contributed to greater understanding and a breaking down of stereotypes," suggesting the need for greater interrogation of participants' beliefs and what they mean. Kudo et al. (2011) are particularly useful as a guide for responding to this gap. Through their methodology of running and organising a Human Library and analysing their perceptions and the perceptions of other participants their study identifies three findings, which they situate within the category of attitudinal change. Firstly, Readers increased their knowledge, understanding and empathy of their Human Books. Secondly, Human Books increased their self-reflexivity. Thirdly, student Organisers transcended their *Self–Other* imaginations (Kudo et al. 2011, 4). In addition to each of the areas identified above, the literature refers to Human Libraries as spaces but does not examine or discuss in depth what this means. Finally, Garbutt (2008) highlights the need for research that provides the Human Library Organisation with theories that are useful for justifying it as an organisation within the anti-prejudice movement, particularly as a strategy for local anti-prejudice activism.

Broader Research Contributions

In addition to the gaps in the knowledge that deal specifically with Human Library and its method, research gaps exist within broader fields of study. Of particular interest to this research project is the ongoing call for research directed at the relationship between social movement organisations and human rights. This is required for both theoretical and practical reasons. Its theoretical necessity is advanced by scholars such as Stammers (2009), Waters (1995) and Ackerly (2011) who encourage other scholars to contribute to the existing body of knowledge about how people engage in social movement organisations at the micro-level to promote the enjoyment of human rights. The practical necessity of further research is highlighted by Garbutt's (2008) call for theories that can justify Human Library's strategy for local anti-prejudice activism. Finally, the need for research into Human Library as a method for promoting human rights is demonstrated by the public acknowledgement of its contribution illustrated by the fact that Launceston Human Library was awarded the Human Rights Organisation Award for Human Rights Week Tasmania 2014.

Research Findings

Examining the way that participants interpret their involvement in Human Libraries has enabled this research project to construct and theorise one key concept and three related process concepts that illuminate and explain how Human Libraries engage people in

countering prejudice and increasing respect for difference. When they do this they contribute to the advancement of people's full and equal enjoyment of their rights and freedoms. The following summarises the meaning of each of these concepts and explains how Human Libraries are spaces for rights and freedoms, raise critical consciousness, promote human recognition, and enable human rights activism.

Human Libraries are spaces for rights and freedoms because they provide people with spaces for difference, embedded safe spaces, spaces for the unspoken, spaces for negotiating difference, rights spaces in a human rights culture and spaces for human rights enjoyment.

As spaces for difference, Human Libraries provide alternative spaces to public spaces that are marked out by parallel lives and micropublics. They counter these "cites of mercurial interaction, divided allegiances, and cultural practices," (Amin 2002, 969) in which participants feel unable to meet with those who are different, and they engage people in safe encounters with difference. They respond to research that calls for anti-prejudice strategies that encourage authentic sustained contact between people from minorities and the majority, as the latter rarely do engage in contact with people who are different (Dandy and Pe-Pua 2013; Priest et al. 2014). Human Libraries respond to these calls as embedded safe spaces upon which people stumble as they move about the "transitory sites" (Amin 2002, 976) within shared communal spaces. These embedded safe spaces are perceived as spaces that offer alternative experiences to "everyday incivility" (Noble and Poynting 2010, 495). They do so as "unsteady social spaces" (Amin 2002, 970) which counteract negative responses to difference by promoting everyday civility and belonging. As such they are spaces for the unspoken and spaces for negotiating difference.

Acting as spaces for the unspoken and for negotiation they confront enforced spatial norms which dictate "appropriate embodied ways of being in public space" (Valentine 2010, 532). They challenge the privatised spaces in people's lives that support the sharing and validation of prejudice by acting as sites for dialogue that are purposefully motivated for "open exchange that provides participants the space in which, together to reflect, critique, affirm, challenge, act, and ultimately transform our collective understanding of the world" (Darder 2002, 82). As spaces for the unspoken and negotiation via dialogue, Human Libraries encourage border-crossing (Giroux 1993), enabling people to move from the sanctuaries,

both physical and ideological, of their everyday micropublics into the dynamic space of the Human Library. This demonstrates how "[o]ne important role in social movements is to connect issues, to connect different actors, and to create deliberative spaces for them to learn from one another" (Ackerly 2011, 228). Such spaces encourage participants to discuss difference in ways that respect people's "right to have rights" (Arendt 1967, 296).

Human Libraries work, as expressed by Nathalie, the Organiser of Launceston Human Library, at "shifting what can be shifted." This is their ongoing contribution to the development of a culture of respect for difference and, in doing so, they are rights spaces in a human rights culture. They contribute to a culture that encourages dialogue about the "little things of racism" (Noble and Poynting 2010, 493) and question prejudice expressed as taken-for-granted attitudes and behaviours that encourage serious racism and other forms of discrimination (Noble and Poynting 2010). Functioning in this manner, they demonstrate how Human Library and other social movement organisations are aimed at "creating cultural and political space for the challenges that social movements offer to society" (Maddison and Scalmer 2006, 83). Human Libraries are spaces that function in the context of people's struggles at home, work and in community. They are spaces for human rights enjoyment because they demonstrate that human rights and freedoms need to be "lived and experienced in everyday life" (Cassin 2006, 283) regardless of such things as sexual identity and physical impairment. They are spaces that enable people to consider what it means for all human beings to be "born free and equal in dignity and rights" (United Nations 1948, Article 1) Human Libraries are spaces for rights and freedoms.

Human Libraries engage people in raising critical consciousness because they enable people to become more aware, critically conscious of the self and critically conscious of others.

Participants in this research project interpret their use of expressions such as "uncomfortable," "fear" and "closed-minded" and demonstrate how Human Libraries involve them in becoming more aware of their feelings and how they treat people who are different. Freire's (1996) concept of conscientisation explains this as a knowing subject's deepening awareness of their social reality which helps them shape their lives and transform their reality (Peters and Lankshear 1994; Freire 1998a; Irwin 2012). The concept of raising critical consciousness resonates with the findings by Kudo et al. (2011) that Human Books

increased self-reflexivity and Organisers engaged in transcending *Self–Other* imaginations. The participants' experience of raising their critical consciousness recalls findings by other anti-prejudice studies that demonstrate that intergroup dialogue can be used to address prejudice by changing people's feelings and by training people to adopt a reflexive stance towards their own and others' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours (Dessel 2010; Kowal, Franklin, and Paradies 2013). How raising the critical consciousness of Human Library participants can contribute to this is informed by studies that draw on conscientisation via their examination of "mindfulness of discomfort" (Wong 2004, 4) and "adult meaning-making" (Mustakova-Possardt 1998, 13).

Participants share examples of their discomfort with sexual minorities and physical and mental impairment and challenge their assumptions to stop imposing generalisations on people different to themselves. This demonstrates how Human Libraries engage people in mindful discomfort and adult meaning-making which research maintains "makes it less likely that they will impose their values and beliefs" (Pitner and Sakamoto 2005, 684) and rather will "take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire 1996, 17). In doing so, participants become critically conscious of the self. For example, Sabina shines a light in a "dark corner" which she had avoided until her participation in the Human Library and by transforming her reaction to people with impairments she engages in Freirean praxis - "action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action" (Freire 1974, 74) – and transforms how she treats people who are different.

Participants demonstrate how they extend this process as they discuss becoming critically conscious of others. Maxine's encounter with a Reader makes her realise that people still suffer homophobia in their communities and families and reflecting on this raises her critical consciousness of her own hurt and that experienced by her Reader's son. In these ways, Human Libraries raise participants' critical consciousness of others and enable them to see the world more critically. They illuminate how human rights can remain a utopian ideal leaving people to suffer prejudice and denial of the enjoyment of dignity and respect, which is their human right. Human Libraries enable people to engage in conscientisation as "the process by which the capacity for critical thinking by the oppressed – of themselves and, ultimately, the society they live in – can be expanded" (Blackburn 2000, 7). This occurs when Human Libraries raise critical consciousness.

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Human Libraries promote human recognition because they encourage being different and sharing common ground as part of being human, they engage people in constructing personal identity and in recognising what it means to be human and how humans should treat one another.

Participants in Human Libraries appreciate that being different is part of being human. Human Books accept and respect what it is that makes them different and this enables them to help people think more critically about how difference is an integral part and an authentic quality of being human. This is how Human Libraries sufficiently acquaint different kinds of people with one another so that they are less inclined to think of those who are different as quasi-human and it encourages them "to expand the reference of the terms 'our kind of people' and 'people like us'" (Rorty 1999, 74). In doing so they confront the blinkered ideal of a human as "a white, European, adult, male, able-bodied, of above-average intelligence and with a high level of education" (Ife 2010, 71).

Participants discover the experience of sharing common ground at Human Libraries and this adds nuance and depth to their understanding of what it means to be human as they recognise that difference and commonality co-exist within humans. In doing so, Human Libraries enact the need to balance discourses of unity and difference and to bring people to appreciate what unites them as much as what separates them (Ife 2010). This encourages people to recognise that they share commonalities without there being a need to identify a single "common" human condition that applies to everyone. This emphasises the way people share common humanity which contributes to expanding people's appreciation of what it means to be human and what it means to enjoy rights and freedoms.

Human Books construct their personal identities via their titles and descriptions and demonstrate how understanding personal identity is part of the evolving process of becoming more fully human (Freire 1996). Human Books demonstrate that being human is complex, multi-dimensional and does not fit simple labels or distorting stereotypes and they engage their Readers in appreciating that personal identity is an authentic expression of what it means to be human. This is how Human Libraries demonstrates that "[t]o ask who human beings are or what it means to be human is to ask what human beings have made of themselves" (Crotty 1998, 150). In doing so Human Libraries assist people to better

understand what is meant by 'human' when people speak of 'human rights.' Thus Human Libraries contribute to human rights because, via the consideration of difference, commonality and personal identity, they lead people to consider how "every human being – man or woman, rich or poor, adult or child, healthy or sick, educated or not – holds human rights" (Orend 2002, 15). This is concretised when Readers describe their contact with Human Books as humanising a story. Such stories illustrate how people recognise what it means to be human and how we should be treated as humans because they are instances in which people are no longer judged as to who and what they are and they are treated as people according to the words they speak and the deeds they enact rather than as being reduced to members of categories (Parekh 2007; Arendt 1958). When Human Libraries enable Readers to stop seeing Human Books as categories or labels, it illustrates how they sensitise people to the way others are categorised as being somehow lesser. This enables Readers to recognise what it means to be human and how humans should treat one another which underpins the construction of humans as holders of rights and freedoms. Human Libraries promote human recognition.

Human Libraries enable human rights activism understood as direct action that contests one side of a controversial issue aimed at prejudice. It does this by mobilising people into action, responding to a desire for knowledge, enabling Human Books to develop from being knowledge providing activists to advocates as well as raising empathy and challenging misconceptions. The concept of enabling human rights activism, in particular, resonates with the findings offered by other studies of Human Libraries.

Human Libraries mobilise people into action who share an interest in challenging prejudice and increasing community cohesion. Mobilising people into action enables people to seize the opportunity to become visible and articulate as they engage in direct action aimed at contesting prejudice. Volunteers recognise their participation as action they can actually do and this demonstrates the way that Human Libraries enable people who have experienced the disabling influences of prejudice to drive anti-prejudice efforts (Morris 2001). Those who volunteer as Human Books represent a spectrum of interests and motivations, from those who act as 'information books' through to those who see themselves as anti-prejudice activists and advocates. Making it possible for people to volunteer as Human Books is how Human Libraries mobilise people into action and it demonstrates that actors can be

individuals and collectives and that agency is "the capacity – the 'power to' - change things" (Stammers 2009, 25). This also demonstrates the value of Human Library's adaptability. In particular, it resonates with Ashmore's (2010) assertion that Human Books can be used as oral sources of information. Though such an interpretation of the role of Human Book does not match the primary aim of confronting prejudice, it is a useful inclusion in Human Libraries because it is a means of attracting people who would not attend Human Libraries with the intention of engaging with difference. Therefore, Human Books who are oral sources of information contribute to the Human Library strategy of countering prejudice because they attract people from their usual micropublics into Human Libraries and into encounters with difference and prejudice (Amin 2002).

The other end of the Human Book spectrum demonstrates how Human Libraries mobilise volunteers to shift from being agents that provide knowledge to advocating for people's enjoyment of their rights and freedoms. In this role they encourage appropriate recognition of other people. This is an important element in working for enjoyment of rights and freedoms because "the struggle for recognition as a rights-holder is the primary rights struggle" (Ackerly 2011, 230). As Human Books talk to their Readers about their mental illnesses, eating disorders, sexual identity and/or Aboriginality, they challenge inappropriate recognition and demonstrate, at the micro-level, that "individuals and groups must demand recognition for themselves if society is to have any hope of taking their claims on board" (Maddison and Scalmer 2006, 191). Human Books experience prejudice directed at different types of minority identity and when they act together for appropriate recognition they highlight the intersectional nature of prejudice and illuminate that "rights' holders' rights enjoyment is interrelated, that no person's rights are enjoyed and secure if perceptions and norms create the conditions under which some persons are not perceived as rights holders" (Ackerly 2011, 230). As such, Human Libraries promote a micro-level contribution to progress and social transformation that turns people's attention "towards the real socialised individuals in their actual social and historical contexts, and [how] the moving force of change – the agency – is located in their normal everyday social activities" (Sztompka 1990, 250).

Central to this form of advocacy is raising empathy, increasing knowledge and challenging misconceptions (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008). This resonates with the study by Kudo et al.

(2011) and other intergroup contact studies (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008; Hodson 2011; Todd et al. 2011; Swart et al. 2011) which have found that participants underwent attitudinal change when they increased their knowledge, understanding and empathy. Similarly, Dreher and Mowbray (2012, 47) note that Human Books assert that they address common misconceptions and "set the record straight." Raising empathy and challenging misconceptions is part of how Human Libraries enact the power to develop new ways of responding to difference and it draws on 'practical knowledge' (Maddison and Scalmer 2006). This is demonstrated when Human Books in this research challenge misconceptions that homosexuals are promiscuous and incapable of developing committed relationships. Human Books use practical knowledge to enable Readers to "walk in their shoes" and come to recognise how prejudice and stereotypes diminish the enjoyment of humans' rights and freedoms (Blackburn 2000). By raising empathy and challenging misconceptions, Human Libraries demonstrate how people's rights enjoyment is diminished by prejudice directed at sexuality, impairment, asylum seeking and other points of difference. In doing so, people who act as Human Books "are brought back into the picture and acquire truly human size: as aware but not omniscient, powerful but not omnipotent, creative but not unconstrained, free but not unlimited" (Sztompka 1990, 250).

This dynamic occurs within readings, which are an example of expressive human rights activism and creative social praxis. They provide Human Libraries with a means of communicating with the mainstream and posing difficult questions about who we are, how we are, what we do and how we do it. It is how Human Libraries offer a corrective to the counter-productive binary polarity that some activists establish between expressive and instrumental activism. Human Libraries offer their micro-level strategy of resistance to local communities as a contribution to an approach to human rights activism that encourages using a suite of approaches to change people's values, beliefs and opinions. Via this means of expressive activism, Human Libraries provide a form of human rights activism that engages people in direct action that challenges misconceptions which impede people's everyday enjoyment of their rights and freedoms.

When Human Libraries mobilise people into action so that they can provide knowledge and advocate for people who are different, as well as raise empathy and challenge misconceptions, they challenge the notion that ordinary people are "little more than pawns"

and "the supporting cast for the 'great men'" (Stammers 2009, 28). Human Library's form of micro-level activism, which engages people in reconsidering prejudice and stereotypes, illuminates what human rights scholars mean when they assert that "ordinary people – working together in social movements – have always been a key originating source of human rights" (Stammers 2009, 1). This activity functions within the wider efforts of social movements as they make ongoing contributions to the advancement of human rights as a contested and problematic concept which requires continual discussion and interpretation of what it means to be human and to appreciate what rights humans require and should enjoy (Ackerly 2011; Baxi 2008; Ife 2010; Stammers 2009). Acting in this way, Human Libraries enable human rights activism.

Future Research

The major need regarding research into Human Library is the requirement for longitudinal studies. Two gaps stand out. Firstly, further research is required which examines the link between attitudinal change and behavioural change over the long term. Such research could ask: Do people who demonstrate changes in attitudes as the result of participating in Human Libraries demonstrate changes in attitudes and behaviour that last over time? This examination would benefit from studying a cohort of participants and examining their perceptions immediately following their involvement in a Human Library and then returning to those participants over a period of years. For example, it would be valuable to keep returning to Rachel, and participants like her, for an annual interview to discuss her reading with Maxine and its continuing impact on her day-to-day life. Such a study would further benefit from interviewing significant people in Rachel's life to gain their perceptions of her attitudes and behaviours towards people belonging to sexual minorities.

Examining changes in attitude and behaviour would also benefit from examining a cohort of participants who committed to attending Human Libraries on a regular basis over a lengthy period of time. For example, it would be valuable to engage Gerry in a study that involved him visiting a Human Library on a regular basis and pursuing his interest in reading Human Books who represent a variety of people from sexual minorities. For example, in addition to reading Maxine, over a period of time he would read a gay man, parents of a son who is gay and other members of the LGBTIQ community. Such a program could extend over a year and examine the outcomes of his involvement throughout that year. In addition to this, it

would be valuable to interview Gerry's son as well as the Human Books he reads to gain their perceptions of Gerry's experience of this program.

These examples of research focused on participants like Rachel and Gerry indicate the second possible research topic, which is an examination of what people involved with Human Libraries refer to as its ripple effect. This indicates the perception that Human Libraries, via the experiences of participants, have a positive influence on participants' friends, families, colleagues and communities. Such a study could ask: What evidence is there to support the claim that changes in attitudes and behaviours that result from participation in Human Libraries extend beyond the individual and produce a ripple effect? The suggested examples provided above offer useful methods for advancing such a study.

The final research gap emerges from my experience of the research interviews. It was evident to me that interviewees became more critical of their experiences of Human Libraries during the interviews. As a result of the conversational style of our interviews, participants developed new insights about their experience of reading or they gradually clarified the way they spoke about their readings. This raises questions regarding the contribution that discussion of participation offers participants. For example, Kudo et al. (2011) employed a group discussion including Human Books, librarians and Readers as part of their study but they did not discuss this in detail. Similarly, at the conclusion of the Willagee Human Library a debrief session was held for the Human Books, but it was not used as part of the data collection for this research project and, as such, does not contribute to its findings. This indicates research potential and an opportunity to contribute to the Human Library Organisation via research focused on developing its method beyond one-on-one conversations.

It would be valuable for future research to examine group discussions of participation in Human Libraries. Two suggestions are offered here. Firstly, it would be useful to invite a group, as did Kudo et al. (2011), including Human Books, Readers and Organisers to discuss their experiences of the Human Library method to gather their perceptions and interpretations of what it achieves. In this context the different roles within Human Libraries would engage with one another and provide each other with feedback on the way each role functions within the Human Library method. This would contribute to our knowledge of

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what the method achieves and how it might be improved and it would also contribute to other anti-prejudice strategies, which draw on contact theory.

Secondly, it would be useful to gather a group consisting of one Human Book and a number of Readers who had each read that Human Book. The aim of the group would be for the Readers to discuss their reading of the Human Book, with the Human Book. This discussion could be used to examine how empathy and misconceptions might be further enhanced beyond the initial one-on-one reading and how group discussion can add to participants' knowledge and continue to correct misconceptions. It could be used to examine the Human Book's appreciation of how he or she is perceived by different Readers. This research project could lead to the development of an additional method for the Human Library Organisation, which would be a Human Book Club. Depending on research outcomes, local Human Libraries could provide this in addition to readings. For example, in addition to its usual Human Libraries, Launceston Human Library could offer a Human Book Club at which a group of Readers could engage in discussion with a Human Book they had read at a Launceston Human Library event. They could discuss what it meant for them to read that Human Book and the Human Book would be able to contribute to their discussion to encourage ongoing learning about what it is like to be that Human Book. Likewise, the shared experiences of the Readers could contribute to the knowledge and experiences present within the group. Using the Willagee Human Library as an example, it could offer a Human Book Club at which Maxine, Gerry, Cornelia, Rachel and Regina met for a facilitated discussion with an Organiser to discuss what is was like to read Maxine and to continue learning.

Conclusion

This qualitative examination of Human Library has undertaken an interpretation of the practical knowledge of people engaged in a strategy of challenging prejudice and increasing respect for difference as a means for promoting humans' rights and freedoms. It introduced this research task using the metaphor of story. The stories told by the participants throughout the research project have offered new knowledge in response to the fundamental research question.

Via the telling of their stories, the participants have enabled this research project to render a new appreciation of the efforts made by people who confront prejudice and promote respect for difference. As we come to the conclusion of this research story we do so with the knowledge that by engaging people in its method of one-on-one dialogue about difference, Human Library engages people in acting at the micro-level of society to counter prejudice and increase respect for difference. Human Library achieves this by providing spaces for rights and freedoms and by raising critical consciousness in its participants for the purpose of human recognition and enabling human rights activism. In doing so the Human Library Organisation contributes to the bottom-up advancement of people's full and equal enjoyment of their rights and freedoms as humans.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Human Book Titles and Descriptions

Volunteer	Human Book Title	Description
Adrian	Walking With The Black Dog Living Without Belief	What is it like to live with depression and anxiety? What have I done to help manage the condition? Hear one person's story of their struggle with this condition. What does it mean to be an atheist? Are atheists lacking a sense of morality? How do I, as a non-believer deal with living in a world dominated by people of faith?
Agnes	Christian Filipino Migrant	The only Christian country in the Far East. Moved to the bush from a thickly populated country.
Amy	Guess Who??	Do you remember that game from growing up, where you guess who the opponent is by the way they look? Well I feel like a living version of the game! People always take a look at me and sum me up based on my age, my hair colour, skin colour/quality, my makeup/clothing, my piercings/jewellery, my chest, my body shape/weight and everything other than who I really am! Before I've even spoken people think they know me, where I'm from, what I do, how smart or wealthy I am, even if I'm nice or scary?! But life is not a game, and I have feelings and depth that you may never know about.... unless you ask! Please don't overlook me, come and ask me about who I really am, the answers are likely to surprise you!
Angela	Lesbian Feminist	Lesbian Feminist Vegetarian Atheist Living with 'isms' and 'ists' can be fun The first person that found my strong opinions disturbing was a family friend. A mother of two young girls herself, she didn't anticipate any problem in looking after me for one afternoon. She returned me four hours later saying "She's an unusual child isn't she - I didn't quite feel up to the job in the end." My mother sympathised. I was only four at the time. Several years ago I received an unsolicited email from my 1978 HSC English teacher. She said she still has nightmares about teaching me- twenty-five years later... And all this because of my lifelong (mostly polite) insistence on thinking things out for myself and refusing to follow the crowd unless it's a journey worth taking. I have a wicked sense of

		humour, I don't take myself too seriously, it's impossible to offend me and I enjoy a good chat- do you want to read me?
Diane H	Living With An Eating Disorder	Why can't she just eat?
Edward	My Life As An Outsider	Many people struggle, and do things that they normally wouldn't do to be accepted into the in-crowd, while others don't seem to mind at all and are perfectly happy with their social status.
	Demystifying The 'Only Child'	I have this little thing I like to say: ' I am the oldest and the youngest'. Being an only child doesn't have to impact strongly on who you are, but for me, it held a dilemma that helped to shape who I am.
Garry	Not the Only Gay In the Village	Can a bloke who has a beard down to his chest, drives a 4WD, smokes cigars & chops his own wood be gay? This is my world folks, in fact it's the world of many men in the villages of Tasmania, & though ya wouldn't want to pick a fight with me ... sometimes, I don't feel safe in the village.
Gordon	Two Many Mothers	The story of an adoptee and my coming to terms with that but, more particularly, the story of finding/meeting my birth-mother and siblings and the not-inconsiderable effect that event had on my life.
Gunter	Living with A Guide Dog	Since my new friend's arrival, my daily life has changed for the best. Of course, it has come with a surprise or two...
	Making Australia My New Home	I came from Germany to Australia in 1952, to work on the Trevallyn Hydro scheme, and later worked as an employee for Ansett. I have had varied life experiences.
John	My Discoveries in Nature, Self and Society	As a child I was brought up to appreciate and respect the natural world. I loved watching wildlife documentaries, had my own little ant colony and often went on trips to the bush with my family. While studying social philosophy and psychology at University in the late 60's, I became disillusioned with the current economic and consumer society and the reckless and destructive indifference to the environment. I saw people becoming alienated from each other and disconnected from the natural world. Through my own studies and life experience I have been seeking different ways of viewing the world. I see the environment not out there, but inside me. I

		have my own feelings, but I know we cannot exist without others. Love and knowing of myself, of family, community and the natural world is all part of my search for meaning.
Judith	Verse and Worse	Socially active poetry covering issues from feminism to racism, taken from my life experience as a mother, grandmother and businesswoman.
Larisa	Jewish Person	Jews and Judaism. The practice of Judaism and growing up a Jew in Australia of American parents from European backgrounds.
Luz	Filipino Migrant	The Philippines and its people.
Maxine	Happily Queer	Happy to discuss any questions you may have about what it means to be Homosexual.
Pari	Trip to an Island without a Bridge	Arriving in Australia and reaching my first home as a married woman. A plane trip with the Royal Flying Doctor. The Australian BBQ.
Pat	A Writer of Australian History	Writing history, especially told with humour. The experience of becoming a vision-impaired author.
Robin	Rob's Ramblings	Mental Health Caring: A father's experience as a mental health carer living with my own depression and a lower back injury.
Roz	Overcoming Adversity	An insight into acquired brain injury and how I deal with the new life, new me, that I have had to lead for the last 24 years!
Ruth	Juggling Life – Making Ends Meet	A world full of activities with limited time on my hands, I juggle with life's journey and daily work and self-engagement. Coping with the various activities in my life, I have often learned to draw from my inner strength and spirituality as well as reflecting on my resilience that is packed with determination, hard work and perseverance to make ends meet.
Sister Clement	The Nun's Story	How I became a Catholic Sister and my life as a Catholic Sister.
Tamaso	Author	Talk to me about writing: I am an author with 18 published books.
Theo	Living the Questions: An Alternative to	How do we assess our decisions within a religious framework? Whose teaching do we follow? Interesting questions I think…

	Fundamentalism	
	Male Embroidery	Can a male enjoy needlework? Why do it? What type of needlework? What comments is one likely to encounter from friends, family, etc?
	Mentoring	Can you influence young people by being with them and listening to their stories?

Appendix 2: Interview Participants

Name	Library	Role	Stereotype
Balfour-Haynes, Gordon	Lismore	Book	Gay Adoptee
Baltruweit, Sabina	Lismore	Organiser	
Barnes, Larisa	Lismore	Book	Jewish Woman
Blanchard, Lynda	Willagee	Reader	
Breier, Gunter	Launceston	Book	German Immigrant / Blind
Broomhall, Edward	Launceston	Book	Outsider / Only Child
Carroll, Catherine	Launceston	Reader	
Chilcott, Theo	Launceston	Book	Male Tapestry Hobbyist / Green Electrician
Clift, Pat	Lismore	Book	Farming Woman / Author
Conroy-Cooper, Garry W	Launceston	Book	Out Gay Man
Dodd, Lindsey	Willagee	Reader	
Drake, Maxine	Willagee	Book	Lesbian Parent
Dyer, Amy	Willagee	Book	Guess Who?
Dyer, Denise	Willagee	Reader	
Fogarty, Catherine	Launceston	Reader	
Goldstraw, Tina	Launceston	Reader	
Haebich, Anna	Willagee	Reader	
Hayes, Diane	Launceston	Book	Eating Disorder
Jessup, John	Lismore	Book	Carer / Mental Health
Kitching, Robin	Lismore	Book	Mental Health
Kourakis, Olympia	Launceston	Reader	
Langslow, Elizabeth	Launceston	Reader	
Lau, Regina	Willagee	Reader	

Lewis, David	Launceston	Reader	
Light, Judith	Lismore	Book	Ba'hai / Feminist
Lonsdale, Tamaso	Lismore	Book	Woman Author
Major, Cornelia	Willagee	Reader	
McCausland, Michael	Launceston	Organiser	
McIntyre, Shauna	Lismore	Organiser	
McWilliam, Donna	Willagee	Reader	
Parsons, Catie	Willagee	Reader	
Pollard, Angela	Lismore	Book	Lesbian / Feminist / Vegetarian
Poole, Adrian	Launceston	Book	Atheist / Depression
Press, Luz	Lismore	Book	Filipina Immigrant
Sagaram, Gerry	Willagee	Reader	
Sagaram, Pari	Willagee	Book	Indian Immigrant
Servant, Nathalie	Launceston	Facilitator	
Shaw, Roz	Willagee	Book	Acquired Brain Injury
Sherri Dawn	Willagee	Reader	
Sims, Ruth	Willagee	Book	African Immigrant
Sr Clement	Lismore	Book	Catholic Sister
Tierney, Agnes	Lismore	Book	Filipina Immigrant / Mother of a Child with an Intellectual Impairment
Watson, Dianne	Launceston	Reader	
Yuen, Rachel	Willagee	Reader	

Appendix 3: Interview Consent Form

Human Library Evaluation

Consent

By choosing to complete the accompanying evaluation you will be able to take part in a research project that is associated with the Human Library Organisation. The research project will study and analyse the Human Library strategy and ask, how do Human Libraries counter prejudice and stereotypes? An important part of this research is the study of the experiences of those who take part in Human Libraries. Your responses to the evaluation will be used in the analysis as part of the research project and will help form a critical response to the research question. In making yourself available to the research project you need to understand the conditions on this information sheet and give your consent.

I, *(participant's name)* _____
hereby agree to being a participant in the associated research project.

1. I have read and understood the information about this project and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I realise that I may withdraw from the project at any time without prejudice.

2. I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published provided my name or other identifying information is not disclosed without my permission.

3. I understand that I may provide contact details (email and/or phone) so that the researcher may contact me for further research purposes.

   Email:

   _____

   Phone:

   _____

Role (circle):   Human Book   Reader   Location:

Signature:

Researcher: Greg Watson   Date:

Signature:

This study has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number
HR132/2011)*. The Committee is comprised of members of the public, academics, lawyers, doctors and pastoral carers. Its main role is to protect participants. If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, c/--- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth, 6845 or by telephoning 9266 2784 or by emailing: hrec@curtin.edu.au.*

Appendix 4: Human Library Explanation

Don't Judge a Book by its Cover

This is an invitation and opportunity for you to become a "book" in a Human Library and to also take part in its associated research project.

Human Library is an international organisation that works to address prejudice, discrimination and stereotypes through an innovative, grass-roots strategy known as Human Libraries. Human Libraries do not offer books to be read; Human Libraries offer humans for conversations. The Human Books are volunteers who make it possible for those who visit Human Libraries, as Readers, to sit and talk about prejudice, discrimination and stereotypes. The aim is that when a person is able to sit with another person, who is the human face of their prejudice, and have a conversation, the Reader is given the opportunity to take the first steps in changing his or her attitudes and behaviours regarding prejudice. Human Books are very precious because they are human beings who help transform society's prejudices, discrimination and stereotypes.

Do you think you could be a book in a Human Library?

As a Book in a Human Library you will represent individuals and groups that are confronted with prejudice and stereotypes and are often the victims of discrimination. As a Book you will have conversations with Readers who attend the Human Library and are ready to talk with a person who is the human face of their own prejudice or use of stereotype. Books do not only speak in response to Readers' questions and comments, they can ask questions and learn about their Readers.

By taking part in a Human Library as a Book, you will help those who attend the Human Library as Readers to learn about their prejudices, understand the stereotypes they apply and begin to reconsider how they practise discrimination. You also have the choice of taking part in the research project that will be associated with this Human Library. The research project will study and analyse the Human Library and ask, how do Human Libraries counter prejudice and stereotypes? An important part of this research is to consider the experiences of those who take part in Human Libraries as Books. If you choose to make yourself available to the research project you will need to understand the conditions on this information sheet and give your consent.

As a book, you will be provided with:
- A safe and secure environment in which to volunteer as a book.
- Training for your role as a book.
- The choice to withdraw from the Human Library and/or research at any time.
- The choice to withdraw any information you have provided the research.
- Flexibility and choice regarding your involvement and time commitment.
- Support, including debriefing of your experiences.
- Confidentiality and security in relation to your provided details.

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Appendix 5: Human Books Interview Guide

Human Book Interview Questions

Research Question: Can Human Libraries contribute to the pursuit of human rights?

Why did you volunteer with Human Library as a Human Book?

What is your book title and catalogue description?

Which prejudices or stereotypes do you represent for Readers?

Please share an experience that you believe shows that a Reader has gained some better understanding as a result of "reading" you.

Are you aware of Human Library having had an impact on your friendships, relationships and your social and community involvements? Are you aware of this happening for any of your Readers?

Are you aware of any personal prejudices or use of stereotypes that you hold? Could you provide an example or two?

Have you noticed any changes in your prejudices or use of stereotypes as a result of volunteering as a Human Book?

What was it that worked to change these?

Does Human Library work to counter prejudice and stereotypes? How?

What other observations or comments would you add about the Human Library method, its aims and outcomes?

Appendix 6: Readers Interview Guide

Human Library Reader Interview Questions

What motivated you to visit the Human Library? How did you come to visit the Human Library?

Which Human Book(s) did you read and why? What was the title and what was it about?

What do you think Human Library and its Human Books achieve?

What beliefs or attitudes did you hold about your Human Book(s) and the group(s) he or she represents before your reading? Or what would you have thought of your Human Book before your reading?

Did the reading teach you anything about yourself?

Did reading the Human Book(s) do anything at all to help change how you understand the Human Book(s) and the group(s) he or she represents? What did you learn from the Human Book? Please describe how you think this happened for you and include some examples.

Have you taken your reading experience with the Human Book(s) into other parts of your life? Have you shared the experience with friends, family, and colleagues or in any other social interactions? Would you encourage others to attend a Human Library?

Have you noticed any changes in yourself since reading your Human Book(s)? Has it had any impact in your life?

Do you believe that the Human Library strategy of bringing people into conversation increases understanding between persons and works to reduce prejudice and stereotypes? Explain why you believe this to be the case.

Please add any other observations or comments that you feel you would like to make about Human Library or that has come up during our conversation.

Appendix 7: Transcription Key

Transcription Requirements:

Listen to audio and transcribe what is said
Include, hmm's and ahh's, etc. in the transcription
No capital letters and no punctuation
Do not correct for grammar mistakes
Transcribe as spoken
Indicate the two different speakers using G (for Greg the interviewer) and a single Capital letter for the interviewee
Present the text in a table, double-spaced with line numbering for every fifth line

Transcription Key:

/	pause (each / acknowledges the length of pause relative to speaker)
[laughs]	laughing
=	latching: when a person starts speaking immediately another person finishes
::	a stretched word (the number of colons indicate the length)
CAPITALS	loudness
italicised	italicised words are those words quietly spoken or whispered
[	two persons speaking at once or crosstalk. See this example:

S: [so that was how it went

G: [that is amazing

G: what happened next

NOTE: If it is felt that additional symbols are necessary then please consult me.

Appendix 8: Interview Transcript Style Example

Shauna McIntyre
Lismore 25 July 2012
Start 0 sec – End 54 min 13 sec

1 5	G	um so its the 25th of july uh 2012 um this is uh an interview with uh shauna mcintyre whos been involved with um Human Library so shauna my research is on um prejudice and specifically looking at how Human Library works to counter of prejudice and stereotypes um and so to to explore that im talking to people who have been involved in the organization of um Human Libraries and readers and and books um and id like to have a talk to you about your involvement in it
	S	mm hmm
10	G	and um if i could have your consent that whatever we gain in this interview i could use in my research and and in my publishing
	S	yes im really happy =
	G	= okay =
	S	= to give you my consent for that =
15	G	= thank you very much thank you um also to to make it clear that at any time you want to withdraw your consent then youre youre able to do that without any prejudice
	S	okay
	G	good um so ive kind of like named you but would you like to introduce yourself and your involvement with Human Library
20	S	sure um uh when i was involved at that time it was called Living Library so please excuse me if i use that term um you might just have to translate that um i i was um the former community development officer at lismore city council and also um from there um i took on the role of the uh project manager

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