

# Archival activism and mental health

Being participatory, sharing control and building  
legitimacy

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the degree of PhD in  
Information Studies: Archives and Records  
Management

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## **Declaration**

I, Anna Katharine Sexton confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

## Abstract

The research underpinning this thesis takes a practical approach to engaging with the concept of a 'participatory archive'. It uses the process of constructing the Archive of Mental Health Recovery Stories (<https://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net>) as a basis for exploring and challenging participatory rhetoric. The disentangling of 'control' running through the participatory process has emerged as a dominant theme: who has controlled the construction of the archive? Who has controlled the resulting knowledge production? To what extent can either the construction, or the research around the construction be seen as 'participatory'? 'Legitimacy' is also a central theme: how has legitimacy in and for this work been built, negotiated and contested? How does the grounds for legitimacy alter across different contexts and situated positions? Another strand emerges around the question of 'activism' in archival frameworks: to what extent is deep engagement a necessary pre-requisite for archival practice that seeks to embrace social justice as a central aim? To what extent is archival activism possible in mainstream cultural institutional contexts? The narrative leads to a final unraveling of the central contradictions inherent in practices underpinned by participatory discourses, with an articulation of what unraveling these contradictions means for me as I move forward. Whilst beginning from 'I', my writing draws directly on reflections from the contributors to the archive, as well as reflections from staff at my host institution (Wellcome Library). As well as addressing the central themes outlined above, I use this thesis to explicitly surface the process of self-negotiation that I have entered into as part of the process. I seek to disentangle the roles and relationships that I have embodied as I have undertaken this research, and I address the discomfort that I have experienced in the collision between my professional, academic and collaborative 'selves'. In summary, this thesis is about the 'we' of participation, but it also seeks to explore how this 'we' has affected 'I'.

## Table of Contents

<b>Declaration</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>12</b>
Overarching context	12
Overarching shifts in research focus	14
Overarching use of an action research framework	14
Positioning as a critical and reflexive learner and practitioner	17
The institutional research setting	19
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>	<b>23</b>
The ‘participatory’ in archival discourse	23
Engaging with paradigms and worldviews	33
Creswell’s four worldviews	34
Postpositivism	35
Constructivism	35
Advocacy/Participatory	36
Pragmatism	36
Archival visions of the ‘participatory’ and the interplay of worldviews	37
Constructivist visions of the ‘participatory’	37
Constructivist visions of the ‘participatory’ in interplay with pragmatism	41
Pragmatic visions of the ‘participatory’ in interplay with postpositivism	44
Participatory visions of the ‘participatory’	45
Clarifying the distinctions	48
Tying the threads together	50
Examining a ‘participatory worldview’ in relation to action research	52
Defining my research interest	63
Exploring Participatory Action Research	63
Defining Participatory Action Research	64
Methodological considerations associated with Participatory Action Research	64
Typologies of Participatory Action Research	64
Tensions with Participatory Action Research	72
Engaging with the social justice agenda in archival discourse	74
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology</b>	<b>83</b>
Clarifying the research design	83
Distinguishing between research and practice	84
Research methods	84
Research ethics	85
Grappling with worldviews, grand narratives and theory	86
Pluralism and its implications	87

<b>Chapter 4: Initial Drawing of the Boundaries</b>	<b>97</b>
Acknowledging the tensions in establishing the practical context	97
Refining the institutional context	98
Targeted collecting	99
Strategic mass digitization	100
Expert interpretation	100
Choosing a stream	100
Developing an issue-based context	101
Mental health, representation and voice in the Wellcome's archives and manuscripts Collections	103
Defining the 'participatory' issue	107
<b>Chapter 5: Visions of the 'Participatory' at the Wellcome Library</b>	<b>109</b>
Exploring attitudes to the 'participatory' at the Wellcome Library	112
Introducing Bourdieu's field, habitus and capital	114
Bourdieu's field	114
Bourdieu's habitus	116
Bourdieu's capital	117
Maintaining professional control of the archive	118
Internal struggles for recognition of expertise	124
Ingrained and embedded structures	128
Comfort as a barrier to change	130
Lack of advocacy for the 'participatory'	131
The broader organizational ethos and its impact	132
Perceptions of social justice	134
Perceptions around audience and stakeholders	136
Neutrality as a potential barrier to enacting social justice	145
The drivers underpinning collecting	146
Recognition of internal dichotomies	149
The 'truth' in the emerging picture?	150
<b>Chapter 6: Finding my Voice</b>	<b>152</b>
Starting from 'I'	157
A confessional tale	157
Getting lost	160
An afterword	164
<b>Chapter 7: Being Participatory, Building the Archive, Negotiating     Control</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Part 1</b>	<b>166</b>
The start of my journal	166
Meeting the gatekeeper	170
Meeting the contributors	173
Building a digital infrastructure	188
Troubling 'participatory' processes	193
Gazing in on 'participatory' methodology	194
The tyranny of 'participatory' discourse	196
The consequences of my constructed archival frame	198
The consequences of the recovery frame	198
Joint reflections on my control	203
Refusing closure	206
<b>Part 2</b>	<b>207</b>
A collaborative shift?	207

<b>Chapter 8: Negotiating Roles and Relations</b>	<b>215</b>
Roles and subjectivity	216
I am a professional archivist	218
I am an academic researcher	223
I am a collaborative researcher	233
Being personal, welcoming attachment, refusing distance	233
Embodying ethics, building trust	235
Acting out of compassion and empathy	238
Finding affinities, acknowledging difference	239
Embracing strong objectivity	242
We are now friends	211
Friendship as experimentation	247
Friendship stretches into the future	250
<b>Chapter 9: Legitimacy</b>	<b>252</b>
Mental health survivor history	255
Mental health survivor activism	261
Contributor reflections	265
Feeling stuck	269
<b>Chapter 10: Participation, Activism and Archival Representation in Mental Health: Back in Dialogue with the Wellcome Library</b>	<b>273</b>
The value of personal narrative in the context of mental health	274
Recognition of responsibility	275
Responsibility in recognition of constraint	277
Troubling relational proximity	280
Active archiving, archival activism, impartiality and deep engagement	283
Residual complexity	291
Shifting perspectives, shifting habitus: confronting ethical complexity in archival choices	300
A more radical shift?	308
<b>Chapter 11: Reaching the Core</b>	<b>314</b>
O my friends, there is no friend	316
The depths of the inversion	323
Acting in recognition of irreducible contradictions: Derrida's 'democracy-to-come'	325
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>332</b>
<b>Appendix A: Interview Guides</b>	<b>366</b>
<b>Appendix B: List of Interviews and Other Primary Sources</b>	<b>370</b>
<b>Appendix C: Contributor Workshops: Example Agenda</b>	<b>372</b>
<b>Appendix D: Key Dates in the Construction and Dissemination of the Archive of Mental Health Recovery Stories</b>	<b>375</b>
<b>Appendix E: Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form Used with the Contributors</b>	<b>376</b>
<b>Appendix F: Description of the Contents of the Archive of Mental Health Recovery Stories</b>	<b>381</b>

## List of Figures

**Figure 1.1:** Selected Screenshots from the Archive of Mental Health Recovery Stories

**Figure 1.2:** Model of Action Research

**Figure 2.1:** Reason and Bradbury's (2001) Characteristics of Action Research

**Figure 2.2:** Arnstein's (1969) Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation

**Figure 3.1:** Midgley's (2011) traditional approach to epistemology

**Figure 3.2:** Midgley's (2011) systemic approach to epistemology

**Figure 7.1:** Critical Reflections on my Centrality

**Figure 10.1:** Mapping Pro-activity and Passivity, Impartiality and Engagement

## List of Tables

**Table 2.1:** Creswell's (1994) Four Worldviews

**Table 2.2:** Worldview Distinctions on a Range of Ontological, Epistemological, Methodological and Practical Issues

**Table 2.3:** Pretty's (1995) Continuum of Participation

**Table 2.4:** White's (1996) Typology of Interests

**Table 3.1:** Basic Research Design

**Table 4.1:** 'How targeted collecting might affect the development of our collections'  
Wellcome Library Strategy (2009-2014)



## List of Abbreviations

DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
EIP	Employee Involvement in Participation
n.d.	No date (of publication)
ICA	International Council on Archives
ICT	Information Communication Technology
MPU	Mental Patients Union
PAR	Participatory Action Research
RNVR	Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve
SAA	Society of American Archivists
SHG	Survivor History Group
UCL	University College London
UK	United Kingdom

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Overarching Context

The research represented in this thesis is woven around the construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories (<http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits>). An online digital archive based around the personal narratives of four contributors: Stuart Baker-Brown, Peter Bullimore, Dolly Sen and Andrew Voyce. The archive also contains my narrative as project instigator and co-creator of the space (see Figure 1.1 for example screenshots from the archive). Key dates in the construction of the archive and its subsequent dissemination are provided in Appendix D, and a description of the contents of the archive is provided in Appendix F to help the reader orientate the narrative within a temporal and contextual frame.



Figure 1.1: Selected Screenshots from the Archive of Mental Health Recovery Stories <http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits>

The purposes behind the construction of the archive are multiple and layered. The contributors and I each have an individual perspective on what motivated our involvement as well as where we see the benefits inherent in both the process of construction and the end product, the archive. These differing perspectives will be threaded through this thesis and surfaced at relevant points through the chapters. Here, I will say that the starting points for the construction of the archive have been inextricably linked to my intention to explore participatory approaches to constructing archives for the purposes of my PhD. Having the Wellcome Library as a host institution for my research meant that I initially framed the archive as a response to the library's existing archive and manuscript collections, and the gaps and biases embedded in the trajectories through and in which their collections grow. I became focused on mental health as a collecting area, where there was recognition within the Special Collections team that there is a silencing of the voice of the individual with mental health lived experience running in and through their archive collections. Troubling the silence, speaking into it and initiating dialogue around it became my means of framing the construction of the archive. This thesis seeks to provide a rich description of what was intended to be a participatory process. It seeks to allow questions around participatory rhetoric and methodology to emerge in the flow of the writing and in the iterative and ongoing process of critical reflection that has accompanied my movements. My narrative does not directly include an analysis or critique of the content that can be found in the archive of mental health recovery stories. The text only refers to the content tangentially when I am seeking to make a point about the process by reference to it. Therefore, my focus throughout this thesis remains fixed on the process rather than the product. This is calculated and deliberate. It is intended to act as a subversion of discourse and theory within the archival field that is normatively 'record-centric'. The way I will speak of the process also deviates from the norms that have evolved within my field. My means of unraveling the processes of record creation stands in contrast to the usual structural-functional starting points used within my field. In this thesis I seek to move away from that typical perspective and rhetoric by paying close attention to the human interactions and relationships that have underpinned the development of the archive of mental health recovery stories.

My narrative begins not at the moment where construction of the archive began, not at the moment where I first met the contributors, but further back into the context that frames the construction of the archive. It begins in the moments when I first began to frame my research and journey through the literature. The intention is to provide the reader with a sense of my early influences, my initial thoughts, and my initial positioning within the

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
theoretical and methodological landscape. Therefore, elements of this introduction (as well as the literature review in Chapter 2 and the methodology in Chapter 3) are presented as a personal journey through the ideas and texts that shaped me in the early stages of the research.

### Overarching shifts in research focus

The initial research proposal submitted to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) focused on an exploration of participatory approaches to archival description in the context of the Wellcome Library's scientific archive collections. Its aim was to explore the specific application of chosen participatory methods in order to enrich understanding of the challenges and potential benefits inherent within these approaches. The research focus has shifted in three ways:

- It has moved away from the framework of archival description towards archival collection.
- It has narrowed in focus from the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders to a more specifically identifiable group of participants.
- It has shifted the exploration of participatory 'methods' away from those initially identified (Revisiting Archive Collections, and life history approaches) towards the 'participatory construction' of a digital archive.

However, despite these shifts, the research has maintained a fundamental tenet that ran through the initial proposal: that this research is concerned with the specific *application* of participatory methods within a local context. Its central aim is the provision of a rich picture on participatory approaches within archival contexts, and its method has been orientated around taking an inductive and *practical* approach to exploration.

### Overarching use of an action research framework

My commitment to approaching the exploration of participatory approaches to archives in a local context through *application* led me to seek to identify the most suitable overarching research framework for taking a practical approach. Through general readings on research methodologies I became acquainted with action research, and saw a strong connection between the aims and purposes behind my research and those embodied within action research frameworks. Action research is applicable in situations where people are trying to take *action*. This means that from

the start the researcher's position is not simply observing the action as an external watcher, but as *an active participant* in the change process that the action entails. The 'made change; and how to achieve it; becomes the object on which research attention is fastened' (Checkland, 1990, p.A39).

As an umbrella term, action research can be viewed as a broad framework that encompasses a varied range of approaches and practices that are grounded in a variety of theoretical standpoints each pursuing different political commitments. Reason and Bradbury (2001) suggest that despite this divergence and plurality, commonality can be drawn from three central strands:

- Action research is participative
- Grounded in experience
- And, action-orientated.

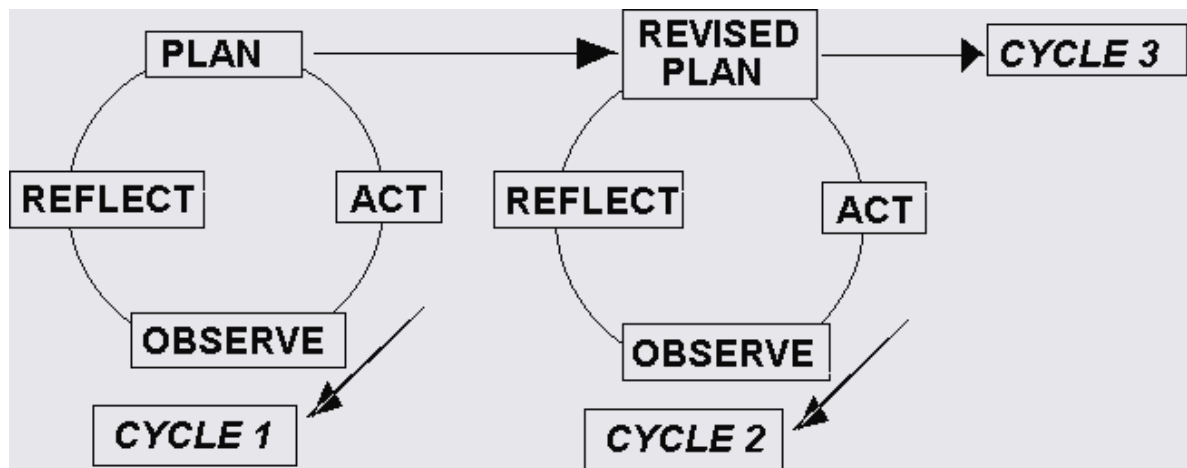
Following the argument developed by Reason and Bradbury (2001), the origins and influences on action research's development can be located in a melting pot of traditions, theories, fields, schools of practice, experiences and actions. A narrative on action research can be formed under the lens of the contemporary critique of positivist science and scientism and the subsequent movement towards new epistemologies of practice. In Western narratives such epistemological concerns have been traced back to Aristotle's work on praxis and phronesis, or the Marxist dictum that the important thing is not to understand the world but to change it. Those concerned with action research in relation to education might point to the influence of pioneering figures such as Freire (1972 and 1976), or highlight the influence of practices that have developed out of humanistic approaches to co-operative learning. Ontologies of action research have been built around feminism and its challenge to structures and practices through consciousness-raising, and equally ontologies have emerged from progressive research on race. Even when considering action research in relation to a single field, such as organizational development, a rich tapestry emerges that can place action research's emergence in relation to systems theory, or alternatively can locate it in the development of clinical inquiry or organizational learning (Reason and Bradbury, 2001, pp.3-4).

Within this rich tapestry of traditions and perspectives surrounding the development and application of action research, tracing its starting points often leads writers back to social experiments conducted in the 1940s by Kurt Lewin and ensuing socio-

technical experiments begun at the Tavistock Institute, which were instigated as practices of social democracy and organizational change. Lewin is generally credited with coining the phrase 'action research', describing it in 1946 (reproduced in 1948) in the following terms:

The research needed for social practice can best be characterized as research for social management or social engineering. It is a type of action-research, a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action. Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice (Lewin, 1946, p.35).

In the same article, Lewin describes the practical stages of action research highlighting the process of problem identification, followed by planning and acting, followed by reconnaissance for fact finding, followed by evaluation of the action. These stages continuously feed into new cycles in which the steps are repeated (p.37-38). Following Lewin, action research has therefore become characteristically associated with the implementation of a series of steps revolving around planning, acting, and reflecting occurring iteratively in a cycle for the duration of any given intervention. Various authors have translated these steps into a visual model to represent the basic movement underpinning action research (see Figure 1.2).



**Figure 1.2: Model of Action Research**  
Reproduced from Riding et al (1995) unpaginated  
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It was Lewin's concept of a cyclical process that I used as an initial building block on which to build my own method of inquiry. I made use of his model, particularly in the



early stages of research, as an explicit and continual reminder of the centrality of the cycle between planning, acting, and reflecting. I also used it as a reminder of the potential for constant re-orientation that underpinned the research perspective I was seeking to adopt.

When I first encountered action research methodology, I was still operating under a set of implicit conceptions of how research and practice operate. Though I had embraced the concept of myself as *active participant*, I had unconsciously bounded the extent of my active participation in a temporal way to the *practical activity* within my emerging research design. However, through critical reflection, I began to appreciate that my commitment to action research was more encompassing than the narrow boundary I first constructed around it. I was in fact applying an action research framework to the whole of the research process, from beginning to end. My initial journey through the literature was a fundamental part of my *active participation*. In engaging in the initial process of conducting a literature review, I was engaged in an *active process* of reading (input), reflection (transformation) and choice making (output). Like the process outlined in Lewin's model of action research, my movement was cyclical. My choice making was dualistic: it involved making decisions that actively shaped the emerging research design, as well as selecting what else to read to feed into the choice making process. Consequently, I believe the decisions I went on to make in my research design can only be understood through a description and analysis of the cyclical processes of reading, reflection and choice making that I was undertaking alongside that decision making process. It is therefore my intention, in Chapter 2, to try and make the early stages of that process as explicit as possible.

### **Positioning as a critical and reflective learner and practitioner**

In embracing the role of *active participant*, there was another initial clarification that was necessary in formulating my understanding of my own positioning within the research framework. I found that, even in the early stages of research, I was beginning to develop a gradual and deepening appreciation that I could not (or perhaps I chose not) to put a boundary between the research and myself. My understanding of my own subjectivity and the roles I play in life, and my growing resistance to the normative distinctions that force degrees of separation between my different 'selves' (personal life, academic life, professional life) became an important motif running through my research. Therefore, it can be taken as one of the

emerging themes to arise out of the fact that I have lived this research. This awareness of a blurring between my own subjectivity and the research process started early on in the research, as I began to appreciate that the process and my personal learning were inextricably linked. There was no objective position from which I could separate myself (my understanding and awareness) from the actions within the research process. So I began to appreciate that the outcomes from the research process were inextricably dependent on my personal development as a critical and reflexive learner and practitioner. I also began to understand that my ability to be critical and reflect, was in turn dependent on the situated positions and vantage points from which I was able to know, see, speak and act.

In acknowledging this here, I am drawing on my initial engagement with writings on reflective practice. In particular, Schön (1991), who theorizes on the knowledge used and created through practice. Schön acknowledges that competent practitioners know more than they can say, and exhibit 'a knowing-in-practice, most of which is tacit' (p.ix). Importantly, however, Schön argues that such tacit knowing can be made explicit through reflection, so that understanding and critical analysis can be undertaken on 'intuitive knowing in the midst of action' (p.ix). Such reflection can also contribute to an ability to cope with the 'unique, uncertain, and conflicted situations of practice' (p.ix).

My invocation of an action research framework early on in the research was indicative of my commitment to developing knowing-in-action. This 'knowing' was brought about *through* a reflective process in which I was reflecting-in-action on my construction of the problem, my strategies for action, my understandings of the phenomena and its context, as well as how my actions were influencing, shaping and changing the problem and its context. Schön (1991) likens this to being a practitioner who allows the situation to 'talk back' (p.ix). Therefore, in each iteration of action it is necessary to consciously seek to appreciate the outcome. In initially framing this reflective process as an intentional element of the research design, I became committed to finding new and unexpected meanings in the changes that I produced, and to redirect my moves in response to such discoveries. In this sense, I was beginning to see the practice as unique and localized, as well as complex and uncertain, so a process of discovering and framing the particular features of the situation would inform and shape the ensuing intervention. The intervention became dynamic in the sense that it was open to continual reframing as my appreciation,

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
and understanding of the context changed.

Schön (1991) argues that the positivist tradition frames practice as a means to an end. He argues that this frame is underpinned by a model of technical rationality in which 'the ends are neatly reducible and knowable, so the practical questions become rooted around 'what "means" best meets the ends' (p.iii). This technical rationality model is commonly based around 'problem solving'. However:

With this emphasis on problem solving, we ignore problem *setting*, the process by which we define the decision to be made, the ends to be achieved, the means which may be chosen. Problem setting is a process in which interactively we *name* the things to which we will attend and *frame* the context in which we will attend to them. When we set the problem we select what we will treat as the things of the situation, we set the boundaries of our attention to it, and we impose upon it a coherence which allows us to say what is wrong and in what directions the situation needs to be changed (Schön, 1991, p.40).

Viewing practice outside of the model of technical rationality enabled me to build an inquiry in which action on the situation became integral with deciding, and problem solving became part of the wider framework of problem setting. Approaching practice in this vein meant that the end goal could not be set at the beginning of the undertaking as a clearly definable ideal outcome. Instead the practice initiated a process in which there was exploration and movement around what the 'desired end' should be, coupled with a commitment to evaluate the action against the emerging constructed ideal. Therefore, a cyclical reflective process of naming and framing the problem and the desired outcomes began to go hand in hand with decisive action and evaluation of that action.

### **The institutional research setting**

Before moving into an exploration of how my initial reading and reflections around participatory approaches to archives begun to *actively* shape my research, I will provide an initial contextual introduction to the Wellcome Library, the host institution for my research.

The Wellcome Trust is 'a global charitable foundation dedicated to achieving extraordinary improvements in human and animal health (Wellcome Trust, 2013a). It focuses on three main areas of activity, reaching across five major research challenges. These three main activities are: supporting outstanding researchers; accelerating the application of research to improve health; and exploring medicine in historical and cultural contexts. The five research challenges are: maximizing the

health benefits of genetics and genomics; understanding the brain; combating infectious disease; investigating development, ageing, and chronic disease; and connecting environment, nutrition and health (Wellcome Trust, 2013b).

The Trust's focus on supporting and accelerating research into health and medicine, coupled with exploring historical and cultural contexts for this activity, can be traced back to the life and outlook of its founder: Sir Henry Wellcome (1853-1936). Henry Wellcome has been labeled as 'one of the most fascinating men of his time' (Wellcome Trust, 2013c). He was a pharmaceutical businessman, an innovator, a collector and philanthropist (Wellcome Trust, 2013c).

Henry Wellcome co-founded a successful multinational pharmaceutical company from which he accumulated his personal wealth. His success was partly due to his shrewd and pioneering use of promotion, image and branding to market and advertise his products. Wellcome himself used his accumulating wealth in his own lifetime to fund medical research. He also used it to fulfill his growing passion as a collector of books and historical objects. His collecting interest lay in his fascination with wanting to understand the 'art and science of healing through the ages' (Wellcome Trust, 2013d). At the time of his death, his personal collection was larger than that of many of Europe's most famous museums. After his death, Wellcome's will provided for the creation of the Wellcome Trust and 'his focus and passions permeate through the organization still' (Wellcome Trust, 2013c).

Although the museum objects collected by Wellcome were transferred to the Science Museum in the 1970s and early 1980s, his book collections were the founding part of the Wellcome Library. Over the years, the Library has been housed in a variety of physical spaces. It has had a sequence of name changes, and has been part of a variety of organizational restructures. However, its history during the later decades of the 20th century has been one of continuing growth and development, with an ongoing acquisitions programme and a focus on expanding use (Wellcome Library, 2013a). In 2007, it became part of the newly conceived Wellcome Collection: 'a free destination for the incurably curious' (Wellcome Collection, 2013). Wellcome Collection 'seeks to explore the connections between medicine, life and art in the past, present and future; at its heart lies the curiosity that drove Henry Wellcome to amass his diverse collection' (Wellcome Library, 2013a).

It is the Wellcome Library that has provided the institutional setting in which the

practical outcomes of my research have been situated, developed and delivered. I was initially embedded in the Archives and Manuscripts team, however, in the course of my four-year research the Wellcome Library has undergone a restructure which has seen the Archives and Manuscripts team become the Special Collections team. This restructure brought together the archives and manuscripts collections with moving images and the contemporary library collections. I refer throughout this thesis to the Special Collections team. In the course of my research I interviewed the whole of the Special Collections team, including the Moving Images Curator and the Contemporary Collections Librarian, yet my core focus has remained centralized on the staff connected with the archives and manuscripts collections.

In the course of the Wellcome Library's history, expanding the archives and manuscripts collections has been and continues to be a central concern. The establishment of a Contemporary Medical Archives Centre in 1979 to collect records of important 20th-century medical organizations and individuals is testament to the Library's commitment to specifically grow the archive collections. Another significant addition during the 1980s was the purchase of the manuscripts (and about 10 000 printed books) from the Medical Society of London Library (Wellcome Library, 2013a). To date (2013), the archives and manuscripts collection includes nearly 9000 manuscripts, and over 800 archive collections from the United Kingdom and Europe, and the Library sees itself as holding 'the most important collection of manuscripts and archives on the history of medicine in Britain' (Wellcome Library, 2013b). Archives in the collection are concentrated on English-language material from the 20th century, and the collecting policy focuses primarily on material created in Britain and its former colonies. Broadly speaking, the archives include (Wellcome Library, 2013b):

- Personal and family papers, correspondence, notebooks and diaries of scientists, GPs and others
- Records of charities, campaigning organisations, and pressure groups
- Records of professional bodies, businesses and research institutions
- The Royal Army Medical Corps Muniment Collection
- The Wellcome Archives, including Henry Wellcome's personal papers, the Wellcome Foundation archives, and records of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum.

As the research progressed, my interest in the Wellcome Library's archives and

manuscripts collections became focused on the theme of mental health and, as I have articulated, the participatory construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories became positioned as a response to the library's existing mental health related collections. This movement towards the theme of mental health is described in Chapter 4, and that chapter also provides an introduction to the Wellcome Library's existing mental health related collections (from the eighteenth century to the present day).

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter seeks to chart how my initial engagement with the literature, in the early stages of the PhD process, shaped my understandings of ‘participatory’ practice. It seeks to surface the distinctions that I made between different conceptualizations of what it means to be ‘participatory’ in the archival literature, and how these distinctions tie in with conceptualizations of the ‘participatory’ across other bodies of literature, particularly in the field of development studies. It focuses in on Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a methodology for being ‘participatory’, and addresses how embracing its tenets led me to make particular decisions on the direction of my research and its design. In moving through this literature, the chapter seeks to surface the process of reading and reflecting that led me to be able to define what I mean by seeking to adopt a ‘participatory approach’ to archival practice. The process of moving through concepts, definitions, and perspectives was the first step towards establishing a framework for the construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories.

### The ‘participatory’ in archival discourse

The notion of being ‘participatory’ has entered into archival discourse relatively recently. Over the past five to ten years, discussions about the ‘participatory’ have simmered on archival blogs and at professional conferences, and articles have appeared within the professional and academic literature that discuss participatory approaches to archives within varying conceptual frameworks (Shilton & Srinivasan, 2007; Palmer, 2009; Flinn, 2010; Huvila, 2008, 2015; Eveleigh, 2015). One of the first writers to attempt to pin the ‘participatory’ down to a concrete definition in an archival context was Theimer (2011), who defined the concept of the ‘participatory archive’ as:

An organization, site or collection in which people other than archives professionals contribute knowledge or resources, resulting in increased understanding about archival materials, usually in an online environment’ (unpaginated).

The assumption within this definition, that ‘participatory archives’ occur predominately in online environments, hints at the trend within our field to predominately ground notions of the ‘participatory’ in a technological context perceiving it predominantly as a construct that grows out from advances in Web 2.0 technologies. The ‘social web’ has enabled crowds, communities and individuals to

interact and contribute to archival content in new ways. In grounding the concept of the 'participatory' in technological developments, the emergence of the 'participatory archive' is read as part of a broader technologically driven cultural trend. The 'participatory', in the context of the social web, heralds a new era of networked social relations which tend towards 'collective intelligence and collaborative creativity' (Eveleigh, 2015, p.15). In this context, the embrace of 'participatory approaches' has been a means of ushering in new ways for cultural institutions to harness the power of the crowd and make use of the 'cognitive surplus' (Shirky, 2010). Yet, confining a definition of the 'participatory archive' to online interactions, fails to take into account the presence of face-to-face practices on the participatory landscape. These practices seek to involve 'participants' in archival work in various ways, without a necessary networked distinction needing to be drawn around the space in which that involvement occurs. Significant among these is the participatory methodology embedded in the Revisiting Archives Toolkit, which encourages user interaction with archive documents as a means to generate new knowledge about those resources, predominantly in focus group settings (Newman, 2012).

At present then, distinguishing the 'participatory archive' is fraught with complexity. This is inevitably connected to the fact that 'participation', as a term from which the notion of the 'participatory' is derived, is itself an infinitely malleable concept that 'can be used to evoke- and to signify- almost anything that involves people' (Cornwall, 2008, p.269). The term 'archive' is equally amorphous. Traditionally, professional archivists have attempted to be particular about the term, narrowing its use to denote a particular type of accumulated material that has been created or received by a person, family or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs; preserved because of its enduring value, as information and/or evidence, following the 'principles of provenance<sup>1</sup> and original order<sup>2</sup> (SAA, 2005a). However, this has always been complicated by the fact that, even in traditional professional discourse, the term has also been used to refer to the physical building in which archives are stored, as well as the organization responsible for the storing. The term 'archive'

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<sup>1</sup> Provenance is defined in the SAA glossary as 'a fundamental principle of archives, referring to the individual, family, or organization that created or received the items in a

<sup>2</sup> Original order is defined in the SAA glossary as 'a fundamental principle of archives. Maintaining records in original order serves two purposes. First, it preserves existing relationships and evidential significance that can be inferred from the context of the records. Second, it exploits the record creator's mechanisms to access the records, saving the archives the work of creating new access tools'.  
(<http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/o/original-order>).



then, in traditional professional discourse, has inherently carried a multiplicity of layered and entwined connotations. It is a particular type of accumulated material (product), maintained according to archival principles (process), that is stored in an archival building (place), by a recognized archival institution (control)<sup>3</sup>. This layered, yet narrow, traditional understanding of the 'archive' has been critiqued and challenged by new perspectives emanating from within and outside the archival field (Cook, 2000; Hamilton, 2002; Harris, 2011). The move towards the digital, and the technology dependent interconnectivity that now characterizes much of our social interactions, has had its impact on challenging how the 'record' and the 'archive' are envisioned and understood from within the archival field. Yet the deconstruction of the long held assumptions made by professional archivists around the notion of the 'archive' is not the result of technological advancements alone. Postmodernist discourses have seeped into the professional literature, albeit at a slower pace than arguably is the case across other related fields (Cook, 2000). The 'archival turn' (Eichorn, 2013) that has occurred across the disciplines, has begun to affect the professional archivist's consciousness and conscience, opening professional archival discourses outwards, enabling us to engage in a rich expansion of our own notions of the 'archive'. This expansion has swept in new perspectives in relation to the form and shape of the archival product, the nature of the archival process, and the places and spaces in which archives are found (Hamilton, 2002). The notion of the 'archive' in professional discourse is richer, but also more nebulous than ever before. When the terms 'participatory' and 'archive' are brought together, the potential meanings appear to offer a multiplicity of potentialities, endless pathways, and unbounded possibilities, that combine to move the 'archive' further and further away from the professional archivist's grasp.

The notion of the 'participatory archive' is likely to continue to remain impossible to pin down to a definition that we, as professional archivists, can all agree on. However, what is abundantly clear in the archival literature, is that its emergence in the landscape is part of a broader and ongoing shake up of traditional concepts of the archive- as a product, as a process, as a place, and as an instance of institutional and/or professional control.

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<sup>3</sup> Popular usages of the term 'archive' have always been more fluid and encompassing, with the word commonly being used to refer to any collection of material that is 'old or of historical interest' (SAA, 2005a) as well to a place in which 'old material is stored' (SAA, 2005b).

Theimer's foregrounding of the notion that the 'participatory archive' is fundamentally concerned with including people 'other than' the 'archival professional' is of central importance. For Theimer (2010), the 'participatory archive' is an opening, an inclusive and hospitable invitation for *all* 'others' to join in:

Friends, followers, taggers, fans, writes, editors, commenters, volunteers, collectors, scanners, sharers, transcribers, researchers, historians, students, users, collaborators, partners, re-users, re-mixers, masher-uppers, citizen archivists, enthusiasts, passionate amateurs, crowdsourcers, nerdsourcers – all are welcome in the participatory archives (unpaginated).

This notion of 'opening up', which is embedded in the vision of the 'participatory archive', is best summarized by Clarke and Warren (2009) in their assertion that now 'we can all play archon' (p.61). Yet the other side to the 'opening up' associated with the 'participatory archive' is necessarily professional 'letting go', and therefore the 'participatory' has inevitably been interpreted as an active challenge to the idea of professional control (Flinn 2010). The vision of the 'participatory', as a challenge to professionalism, is by no means a phenomenon that is unique to the archive field alone. The tenets of a similar constructed opposition around 'professional' and 'other', and 'opening up' via 'letting go', echoes across the discourse emanating from the cultural sector. For example, Trant (2008), writing from a museum perspective suggests that creative participatory approaches 'opens up the museum to the possibility that expertise exists elsewhere; and that the museum could benefit from the knowledge of many communities' (p.285). For Trant (2008), this recognition translates into a determined form of advocacy around the need for professionals to relinquish their authority:

Professionals can only ensure that cultural institutions stay relevant by changing their stance about the nature of their role;...demanding authority is an act, often of arrogance, that denies the contribution of others to the development of knowledge (p.290).

This twofold rhetoric, of 'opening up' and 'letting go' has enabled participation in and around the archive to be heralded as a form of democratization (Palmer, 2009; Flinn, 2010), and as a means of achieving greater diversity, community engagement and social inclusion (Newman, 2012). Yet under the surface of this rhetoric there are tensions, complexities, and questions, and the participatory landscape remains a 'fraught terrain' (Duff & Harris, 2002, p.277). As a collective, archivists and related heritage professionals are struggling to redefine a new professional identity where we can still claim that we have a valuable role to play in managing and delivering

cultural content in a changing participatory landscape in which our traditional skills and areas of expertise have been brought into question (Lehane, 2006; Haythornthwaite, 2009; Yakel, 2011). Certainly, professional anxiety over the 'threat' to professional authority is an ever-present reality in the literature (Duff, 2010; Light & Hyry, 2002). Yet all this angst begs a fundamental question as to whether a redefinition of role is really necessary, given that professional control is continually applied *within* so-called participatory spaces. Having studied a range of case study examples of participatory approaches to archives instigated by mainstream archive institutions, occurring between 2010 and 2014, Eveleigh (2012) suggests that:

User participation may be expected to bring change to such universal functions as description, appraisal and access, or to put claims to certain distinctive professional attributes (such as archival authority) under considerable strain, but the reality of any shift seems rather more constrained, even disappointing (p.2).

Eveleigh (2015) draws on Haythornthwaite (2009) to illustrate how what might appear to be a radical user re-orientation in and around cultural content, in practice, continues to enable the professional to exert considerable control over the resulting spaces:

Forums exist to draw in contributions, responses and comments, but are configured by site owners to limit the types of input and the visibility of individual contributors and contributions. At their leanest, they ask for a contributor's action, but not their opinions – e.g. as in clicking on surveys, identifying objects...verifying spellings...-and return only quantitative measures of participation or aggregate summaries of responses. In these highly lean forms, individuals interact with the computer, not with each other, and the site owners retain authority and control over the acceptance or rejection of submissions and what is done with them (Hythornthwaite 2009b, p.6 in Eveleigh, 2015, p.66).

Is the 'participatory archive' as envisioned in the archival literature and born out in practice really a radical space that interrupts and subverts the traditional power dynamic between 'professional' and 'other'? Can it be legitimately tied to processes of democratization? Is the participatory archive really a space for likely empowerment? To attempt to open up my discussion on participation in archives, as a means to chart my own growing suspicions and concerns in relation to the rhetoric around the 'participatory', I will introduce and explore in some depth two articles on being 'participatory' within the archival literature. My juxtaposition of the two papers seeks to draw out the beginning of my own understanding of distinctions between different approaches to the 'participatory' within my field, and marks my growing

commitment to a deeper engagement with an analysis of the underpinning philosophies behind participatory approaches within archives.

The first article under analysis is Shilton and Srinivasan's (2007) 'Participatory Appraisal and Arrangement for Multicultural Archival Collections'. The argument set forward in the article forcibly roots participation within the dynamics of societal power. It begins with a discussion on archives and power that draws on earlier discourses within the literature, and it voices the central notion that inherent within the archival processes of appraisal, arrangement and description is the 'power to represent' (p.87).

It is worth stepping back from the construction of Shilton and Srinivasan's argument to consider the conceptual relationship between representation and power that is being taken forward. Implicit in the statement that archives have the 'power to represent' is the notion that there is power *in* the act of representation. Superficially representation can or has been viewed as a reflective process, a mirroring of reality. Representation is 'representative' if and when it is accurately reflective. This is in line with a positivist tradition within archival discourse that has argued that archival institutions only have a passive role to play in society, to represent through reflection – a powerless positionality<sup>4</sup>. However, the concept of representation takes on its own power when it is realized that it is not only reflective but it is also creative. In other words, representation not only reflects power but is also part of the construction of power, and is therefore a *powerful* process. This has been recognized and taken forward in postmodern deconstructions of archive theory that have revealed that even within a passive and reflective stance, it is impossible *not* to construct.

When archival institutions have conceptualized their role to represent society as a passive reflection, a mirroring, they are determining a reliance on the power structures within society. What occurs is therefore a natural alignment between the archival institution and the powerful. As the powerful are represented, so their societal power is both reinforced and constructed in the very process of representation. Representation has a 'double inscription' (Hall, 2005, p.170). Representation *is* controlling and powerful. History, culture, memory and knowledge

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<sup>4</sup> Hopkins (2008) illustrates that this positivist view of archival institutions as passive reflectors pervades even relatively recent archive literature such as the Archives Task Force, *Listening to the Past, Speaking to the Future*, 2004 p.12 in which archives are celebrated as the 'direct, un-interpreted and authentic voice of the past' (p.89).

become the affordances of societal power: continually (re)constructed through representation.

This unraveling of the constructive and powerful nature of representation, has been articulated in cultural theory and can be found in museum discourse but its adoption in the archival discourse has been slower, as noted by Schwartz and Cook (2002), who argue that 'archivists- as keepers of context- have, with a growing number of exceptions, singularly fallen behind in their theorizing about archives and records, and the power relations embedded in them, shunning the shifting, interactive and dynamic perspectives of the postmodern relativity for the more comfortable and passive stance of the detached observer' (p.10).

Shilton and Srinivasan (2007) argue that traditional archives, as defined in archival discourse, are manifestations of societal power. They play an active part in societal control over history, culture, memory and knowledge. This control inevitably leads to an appropriation over the histories of marginalized communities. The marginalized have no power of their own to represent, so societal power represents them always as the 'other'. A dichotomy of inside and outside results. Those on the outside, or on the edges of power and dominance are, and also continually become, marginalized and ignored (p. 92).

Shilton and Srinivasan are not alone in articulating the 'marginalizing' potential within archival representation. Notably Flinn (2010) roots the growing call for 'democratization' within archives in this dynamic:

In essence, the call for a democratization of archival practice arises from an understanding that the archive...and archival practice overwhelmingly privilege the voices of those with power and influence in society. Moreover, it is contended, they tend to support national (and/or local) histories and heritage which exclude and subordinate many (perhaps the majority) within society on the basis of gender, class, politics, sexuality, race or faith. When these 'others' do appear in the archives, they rarely speak with their own voice, but rather appear as the objects of official interest and concern (unpaginated).

A 'participatory approach' to archives, in the context presented by Shilton and Srinivasan (and others with a like mind) is inextricably rooted in redressing the uneven balance of power and control. The 'participatory archive' is framed within an assertion that representation is inherently powerful, and that it is impossible for archival institutions to position themselves outside of the power of representation,

and that attempts to do so only result in becoming complicit with the forces of societal power. Archival institutions, in acknowledging their own power (which is ever present in what they reflect) can therefore influence the redistribution of power. Archival institutions are not powerless. The active redistribution of power can be achieved *through* 'participatory approaches', in which archival institutions open up spaces for the marginalized as well as giving power *to* the marginalized. Power to enable them to speak for themselves, on their own terms.

The second article that I am introducing here is Huvila's (2008) 'Participatory archive: towards decentralized curation, radical user orientation, and broader contextualization of records management'. Huvila's conceptual framework for the 'participatory archive' is centered on participation by archive users (researchers). It is focused on the creation of digital research environments in which existing archive collections, that may or may not be physically dispersed, are described and contextualized in the digital environment. The descriptions, the linkages and the resources can be continually added to leading to a constant evolution of the archive and its associated metadata.

His central argument is that archive users as a collective have the most in-depth subject knowledge on archive records, their contexts and uses. Therefore what is required in building digital systems for research use is an embrace of radical user orientation in which usability does not denote use alone, but also denotes a deeper level of involvement in the sense of actual participation in the process of description, contextualization and evolution of the archive. In his framework there is the notion of 'decentralized curation' (p.25). This is connected to a redistribution of power where the archivist is responsible for the technical maintenance of the system, but the authority to describe, make links, interpret and add to the collection is not pre-determined. This authority is given over to the users of the system (which can include the archivist). Essentially, Huvila seeks to give power and control to 'the community of the record' (Flinn, 2010).

There are several important distinctions between Shilton and Srinivasan's (2007) stance and that of Huvila's (2008), which Huvila himself engages with in his article. Shilton and Srinivasan take the marginalized as a starting point and position them within a dichotomous framework. The marginalized are defined as a pre-determined community to which power is (in some senses exclusively) given over to. Huvila, on

the other hand, believes that in a 'participatory archive' there should be no pre-determined consensual community:

The 'community' is a sum of all individual structures, descriptions, orders, and viewpoints contributed by individual participating archive users whether they are users or contributors, archivists, researchers, administrators, labourers, or belong to marginalized communities or the majority (p.26).

This concept of the 'community of the record' is enticing because on the surface it allows for an approach to being 'participatory' that takes knowledge and expertise as the basis for participation, but does not seek to determine who, what, or where that knowledge and expertise comes from. In this way, it is removed from the positioning of inside-outside, centre-periphery, mainstream-margins, archivist-other. This opens up the potential to consider that where there is no dichotomy there can be no marginalization.

Huvila grounds his theory into recent archival discussions on context, in which there has been a growing acknowledgement (see McKemmish et al, 2005) that there are always an infinite number of possible parallel provenances, descriptions, orders and pathways to archival information. Therefore, Huvila draws on Weinberger (2007) to argue that the 'participatory archive' can assume 'no consensus on order, no first order of order' (p.26).

In a sense, Huvila drives at the heart of the tension in the participatory framework put forward by Shilton and Srinivasan, that in seeking to represent and empower the marginalized the result is a new exclusivity that privileges one ontology. In placing participation within a dichotomy, the result can only ever be the same inside and outside and 'othering'. The only change is perhaps who is now dominant. However, in putting forward an alternative version Huvila *may* be returning to an alignment with the positivist stance on archival theory, that sees archival institutions as outside of societal power relationships. The passivity in his approach, that facilitates but does not assume, ultimately has the potential to mean that the profession (on a macro level) will find itself continually aligned with the dominant, representing them and being complicit in the construction and reconstruction of their dominance.

What I am seeking to draw out here is my initial sensing of a distinction between versions or models of the 'participatory archive' within the archival discourse, as

made explicit through the juxtaposition of Shilton and Srinivasan's and Huvila's models of the 'participatory archive'. On the surface, there are compatibilities between these two versions of being 'participatory'. They both seek to alter archival processes and the resulting archive through collaboration. They both seek to decentralize the role of the archivist to widen the boundaries on who can be involved. They both invoke a process of democratization, which draws on the concept of a 'shared authority' between participants. However, under the surface, they are in fact each drawing on different underlying assumptions and starting points.

On the one hand, Shilton and Srinivasan are modeling participation in a political framework- actively seeking to address injustice and marginalization- acknowledging, engaging and reversing the dichotomies that power relations create between included and excluded individuals and communities. On the other hand, Huvila is modeling participation in a knowledge production framework, seeking to negate the presence of inside and out through an all embracing call to participation, looking for the creation of richer, more nuanced and (arguably) more representative resources.

This led me to want to ask some fundamental questions: are these models compatible or are they in fact radically opposed? Does the shared rhetoric of 'democratization', 'decentralization', 'shared authority' and 'collaboration' between these participatory models obscure a fundamental disjoin which needs to be made more explicit?

As I moved forward with my literature review I was looking to engage with the underlying philosophies, assumptions and frameworks inherent in the different models of participation depicted in the literature. However, I found articulating the differences difficult until I came to a point where I was able to marry some parallel reading on paradigms and worldviews, undertaken initially to inform my choice of methodology, with my reading of the archival literature. I found that applying a framework of worldviews to the participatory discourse in the archival literature provided me with a structure in which to examine, expose and explicitly articulate the implicit differences.



## Engaging with paradigms and worldviews

In seeking to articulate the distinctions between participatory approaches within archives, I have found deeper personal clarity through an engagement with a body of literature that seeks to distinguish between what I am referring to as the competing *paradigms* or *worldviews* from which research and practice is undertaken.

The term *paradigm* is closely associated with the work of Thomas Kuhn who, in his seminal work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1963), challenged the commonly asserted view of progress in 'normal science'. Prior to Kuhn's challenge, progress in the sciences was seen as being an accumulation of facts and theories that build in a mechanistic fashion from core truths. Kuhn's radical position was that science is in fact episodic rather than cumulative, where periods of revolution lead to a fundamental shift in outlook that alters perceptions and creates new directions of discovery. These revolutionary periods result in what Kuhn refers to as *paradigm shifts*. Kuhn himself did not advocate for the application of his paradigm concept to the social sciences, preferring to see a fundamental distinction between the natural sciences, which were his concern, and the social. Nevertheless, the *paradigm* concept has been developed within the social sciences (Wikipedia, 2013a). Handa (1986) was perhaps one of the first to take up Kuhn's concept of a *paradigm shift*, focusing on the social conditions that lead to such a shift and the after effects in changing perceptions of reality. Thus the concept of *paradigm* has been taken up in the social sciences to describe the set of experiences, beliefs and values that effect perceptions of reality. In this vein, societies, communities and individuals can undergo Kuhnian paradigm shifts when there is a change in dominant values or systems of thought (Wikipedia, 2013b). In this sense, the concept of a *paradigm* is very much akin to the concept of a *worldview*. The term *worldview* is a calque of the German word *Weltanschauung*, which is composed of *Welt* (world) and *Anschauung* (outlook). It is used to describe the entirety of an individual's or a society's point-of-view. A point-of-view that includes 'natural philosophy; fundamental, existential, and normative postulates; or themes, values, emotions, and ethics' (Wikipedia, 2013c). It refers to a *wide world perception*. Additionally, it refers to the framework of ideas and beliefs through which an individual, group or culture interprets the world and interacts with it (Wikipedia, 2013c).

Building on the closely related concepts of *paradigm* and *worldview*, some social researchers have sought to distinguish the overarching positions from which

research and practice is initiated and interpreted. In this vein, a *paradigm* or *worldview*<sup>5</sup> is used to refer to the fundamental set of (conscious or unconscious) assumptions from which the researcher and researched are positioned. Guba and Lincoln (2005), who favour the term *paradigm* rather than *worldview*, sum up the characteristics of a *paradigm* as the overarching system that ‘guides the investigator, not only in choices of method, but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways’ (p.190).

### Creswell’s four worldviews

My first encounter with ‘worldviews’ came from reading Creswell (1994), so I will begin with introducing his ideas<sup>6</sup>. As outlined in the table below, Creswell suggests that research, and presumably therefore practice, is undertaken from four distinct worldviews.

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<sup>5</sup> Other terms often used synonymously with *paradigms* and *worldviews* are *metatheories* (Hjorland, 2005); *epistemologies* and *ontologies* (Crotty, 1998), or *broadly conceived research methodologies* (Neuman, 2006)

<sup>6</sup> When making broad distinctions between worldviews, there is no one singular or ‘right’ way to cut across the complexity of the landscape. I hold to the system’s philosophy that ‘everything is connected to everything else’. Yet to aid understanding and draw together commonalities, attempts at distinctions are both helpful and fruitful as long as we understand the arbitrary nature of the boundaries that we are setting. Here it is useful to acknowledge that Creswell’s four worldviews differ, for example, from the four inquiry paradigms put forward by Guba and Lincoln (2005) who amongst other differences use ‘Critical Theory et al’ as a blanket term to include a variety of paradigms such as feminism and participation. Creswell’s four worldviews are also different again from those proposed by Reason and Heron (1997), and no doubt to many other competing distinctions that I have yet to come across. I have nevertheless found Creswell’s worldviews useful as a lens through which I have been able to critically unpick the archival discourse around participation – it has provided me with a means to compare and draw out some of the implicit assumptions behind participatory models.

<b>Table 1.1 Four Worldviews</b>	
<b>Postpositivism</b>	<b>Constructivism</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determination</li> <li>• Reductionism</li> <li>• Empirical observation and measurement</li> <li>• Theory verification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding</li> <li>• Multiple participant meanings</li> <li>• Social and historical construction</li> <li>• Theory generation</li> </ul>
<b>Advocacy/Participatory</b>	<b>Pragmatism</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political</li> <li>• Empowerment Issue-oriented</li> <li>• Collaborative</li> <li>• Change-oriented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consequences of actions</li> <li>• Problem-centered</li> <li>• Pluralistic</li> <li>• Real-world practice oriented</li> </ul>

**Table 2.1: Creswell’s (1994) Four worldviews**

Reproduced from Creswell (1994) p.6

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### **Postpositivism**

According to Creswell (1994), postpositivism represents a deterministic approach to research and practice in which there are casual relationships that effect outcomes. It is also reductionist in that the intent is to reduce broad ideas into small discrete sets of ideas to test. The ontological position is that there is an ‘objective’ reality which must be carefully observed (usually) through numeric measures. The epistemological position is that knowledge about objective reality is conjectural and anti-foundational. Therefore it is impossible to ‘prove’ a hypothesis and is only possible to fail to reject it. The laws and theories that govern the world must be tested, verified and refined so that we can understand the world. Objectivity is an essential requirement of competent inquiry, and therefore validity is tested on the basis of analysis of bias (p.7).

### **Constructivism**

In contrast, Creswell’s (1994) constructivism involves taking a non-deterministic approach, seeking to understand the subjective meanings that individuals, communities and societies place on their experiences as well as meanings directed towards certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple and are formed through interaction with others, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views, rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas.

The goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied. Often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. Thus, constructivist researchers often address the processes of interaction among individuals. They also focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants. Researchers recognize that their own backgrounds shape their interpretation, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural and historical experiences. The researcher's intent is to make sense of, or interpret, the meanings others have about the world. Rather than starting with a theory (as in postpositivism), inquirers generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning (p.8).

### *Advocacy/participatory*

Creswell (1994) contrasts constructivism with an advocacy/participatory worldview suggesting that, for a participatory researcher, a constructivist stance does not go far enough in advocating for an action agenda to help marginalized peoples. A participatory worldview is intertwined with politics and a political agenda. Thus, the research contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's own life. Moreover, specific issues need to be addressed that speak to important social issues of the day; issues such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression and alienation. The researcher often begins with one of these issues as the focal point of the study. This research also assumes that the inquirer will proceed collaboratively so as to not further marginalize the participants as a result of the inquiry. In this sense, the participants may help design questions, collect data, analyze information or reap the rewards of the research. Advocacy research provides a voice for these participants, raising their consciousness, or advancing an agenda for change to improve their lives. It becomes a united voice for reform and change (p.9).

### *Pragmatism*

Finally, Creswell offers pragmatism. He acknowledges that there are many forms of this philosophy, but for many, pragmatism as a worldview arises out of actions, situations and consequences, rather than antecedent conditions (Creswell, 1994, pp.10-11). From a pragmatic position, there is a concern with solutions to problems (Patton, 1990). Instead of focusing on methods, researchers emphasize the research

problem, and use all approaches available to understand the problem (see Rossman & Wilson, 1985). As a philosophical underpinning for mixed methods studies, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) convey its importance for focusing attention on the research problem in social science research, using pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the problem (p.10-11).

### **Archival visions of the ‘participatory’ and the interplay of worldviews**

An exposure to the distinctions made by Creswell on the fundamental assumptions underlying research practice, enabled me to return to the archival discourse afresh in order to explore what underlying stances characterize the profession’s framing of the ‘participatory’. What emerges from this exploration is the discovery of a complex interplay between worldviews, which I hope will be fruitful to articulate.

On first encountering Creswell’s distinctions between worldviews, I sensed a link between his description of constructivism and conceptual viewpoints emerging from the archival discourses around the ‘participatory archive’. I have already discussed Huvila’s (2008) vision of the ‘participatory archive’, which has resonance here. Instead, for breadth, I will use the emergence of Anderson and Allen’s (2009) participatory vision of the ‘archival commons’ to illustrate the link between a constructivist perspective and visions of the ‘participatory’ in archival discourse.

### ***Constructivist visions of the ‘participatory’***

The archival commons is a conceptual model for enabling networked participation around archival (and related) resources. Anderson and Allen (2009) describe it as a ‘peer-based framework for the assembly, arrangement and representation of related resources within the context and systems of archives, libraries and cultural heritage organizations’ (p. 385). Its fundamental concern is the active involvement of users in archival processes:

An archival commons would be a space where cultural professionals, researchers, and interested members of the general public could contribute narrative and links among objects of interest held by archives, libraries, and/or museums and systematically reflect those activities within the primary repository itself (p. 383).

Anderson and Allen acknowledge that their vision for the active involvement of users is underpinned by Giddens’ theory on structuration and the roles of human agency and social structure. Does a stance based on Giddens’ structuration theory fall under

the broad umbrella of constructivism as put forward in the distinctions made by Creswell? Contention necessarily exists around the margins of philosophical and theoretical foundations within a broadly constructivist categorization. For example, Locher and Prugl (2001) trace variations in constructivist views through the field of International Relations, and in doing so draw out the different underlying perspectives and theories that exist under this umbrella term. Locher and Prugl (2001) distinguish links between a broadly constructivist worldview and theories around ideational causation (Yee 1996). They also highlight constructivist discourses that use theories on norms and social contexts as constructivism's crucial explanatory variables (see Finnemore 1996 and Risse-Kappen, 1996). They point to constructivist discussions that focus around theories on institutionalization and intersubjectivity (see Ruggie 1998), and surface the perspectives of writers that narrow constructivism within a pre-occupation with language (see Fierke, 1997). Through Locher and Prugl's (2001) argument it is possible to see that some constructivists draw from philosophical realism, some from sociological theories (of which Giddens' is one of several), some from linguistic and critical theory and some from the writings of French post-structuralists. However, Locher and Prugl (2001) point out that:

What diverse constructivisms do have in common is...a way to depict the world. Constructivists describe the world not as one that is, but as one that is in the process of becoming; they replace a 'positional' with a 'transformational ontology' (p.114).

I would argue that such a 'transformational ontology', that enables the archive to be in 'a process of becoming' through user participation, is at the heart of Anderson and Allen's (2009) participatory vision; and that their vision is therefore consistent with a constructivist stance. They themselves refer to this as the 'idea that an archive can invoke and reflect constantly changing views and meanings' (p.389). In other words, it is the development from within, in an ever-changing process of interaction (in Anderson and Allen's view between structuration and agency) that inductively creates the archive itself. According to Anderson and Allen, the concept of dynamic creation is built upon the idea that archives should 'reflect changing use and meanings rather than a static end state of arrangement and implied meaning' (p.391). The idea of multiplicity is also crucial to Anderson and Allen and is tied into the belief in multiple contextualities, and the assertion that no one record holds the whole story.

At this point it is useful to examine the emergence within the archival literature of the inter-related concepts of multiplicity (a recognition of the plurality of meanings, positions, viewpoints and contexts in which archives are located) and dynamism (archival use and reuse which constantly reinvents the meanings, positions, viewpoints and context in which archives are located). I see these concepts as constructivist preoccupations (upon which Anderson and Allen (2009) draw). However, Anderson and Allen, in keeping with the trends within the archival discourse, choose a different (but broadly compatible) label, choosing to articulate them as *postmodern* preoccupations (p.384).

Many archival writers have contributed ideas and articulations that have helped to shape the emerging concepts of multiplicity and dynamism within archival discourse. However, Terry Cook (2000) was perhaps the first to seek to address whether the growing acceptance of these articulations represents a paradigm shift for the profession. Cook, upon whom Anderson and Allen draw, articulates the emergence of these concepts in the following terms:

At the heart of the new paradigm is a shift away from viewing records as static physical objects, and towards understanding them as dynamic virtual concepts; a shift away from looking at records as the passive products of human or administrative activity and towards considering records as active agents themselves in the formation of human and organizational memory...stated another way, archival theoretical discourse is shifting from product to process, from structure to function, from archives to archiving, from the record to the recording context, from the "natural" residue or passive by-product of administrative activity to the consciously constructed and actively mediated "archivalization" of social memory (p.4).

In labeling this shift as an embrace of postmodernism, Cook (2000) is articulating a rejection of modernist ideas, and is pointing to the emergence of a new professional position:

The postmodern distrusts and rebels against the modern. The notions of universal truth or objective knowledge based on the principles of scientific rationalism from the Enlightenment, or from employing the scientific method or classic textual criticism, are dismissed as chimeras. Using remorseless logical analysis, postmodernists reveal the illogic of allegedly rational texts....Fact in texts cannot be separated from their on-going and past interpretation, nor author from subject or audience, nor author from authoring, nor authoring from context. Nothing is neutral. Nothing is impartial. Nothing is objective. Everything is shaped, presented, represented, re-presented, symbolized, signified, signed, [and] constructed...No text is a mere innocent by-product of action as Jenkinson claimed, but rather a consciously constructed product...there is not one narrative in a series or collection of records, but many narratives, many stories, serving many purposes for many

audiences, across time and space (p.7).

The difficulty with locating the shift as modern to postmodernism rather than more specifically away from positivism and towards constructivism is partially acknowledged by Cook (2000) himself in his assertion that ‘the problem with postmodernism is of course one of definition. It affects so many aspects of society today that it can mean almost anything depending from which perspective and discipline a particular commentator speaks’ (p.10). Leaving aside the complexities of the alignment between constructivism and postmodernism, and whether the broad paradigm shifts in the archival profession are more accurately labeled as an embrace of ‘constructivism’ rather than just an evocation of ‘postmodernism’, I am interested in focusing on the two central concepts upon which Anderson and Allen’s (2009) model of participation is built: multiplicity and dynamism, which I associate with a constructivist perspective.

In modeling participation around these concepts, Anderson and Allen embrace the paradigm shift articulated by Cook (2000) and seek, through the *process* of participation, to build an archive that is fluid and multidimensional in relation to content, meanings and context. The embrace of fluid and multi-dimensional participation leads Allen and Anderson to two inter-related, but I would argue problematic, claims about the nature of the archive that is created from this broadly constructivist stance on the ‘participatory archive’. The first is that they are creating ‘an archive for everyone’, which builds on previous calls in the literature that speak about enabling an ‘archives of the people, by the people, for the people’ (Evans, 2007). The second, which also builds on an emerging philosophy within archival discourse, is that archives can and should be viewed as non-rivalrous goods.

My increased awareness of a tension in the model of a participatory archive that is built around a broadly constructivist stance (as set out by Anderson and Allen) has grown as I have engaged in wider readings around constructivism. For example, I have found a close reading of Locher and Prugl (2001), who approach constructivism from the standpoint of feminism, useful in pointing out that:

The constructivist failure to problematize the research process as a social (and therefore political) process of construction is logically inconsistent with an ontology of becoming (p.111).

Crucially, a failure to engage with the political and to ask the crucial questions of ‘who knows?’ And ‘who can know?’ renders the claim that a constructivist archive is



an 'archive for everyone' questionable. However, a claim that a constructivist vision of a participatory archive lacks any engagement with the politics of construction needs further exploration. There is, in fact, a political undertone that emerges from Anderson and Allen's (2009) discourse. It can be found in the authors' acknowledgement that the vision of the 'participatory archive' that they are putting forward is based on a 'decentralized market-based approach to archival representation' (p.384).

### *Constructivist visions of the 'participatory' in interplay with pragmatism*

I see Anderson and Allen's 'archival commons' as representative of a broadly constructivist approach to the 'participatory archive'. However, aside from the embodiment of the constructivist notions of 'multiplicity' and 'dynamism', Anderson and Allen's vision of the 'archival commons' does in fact draw upon another more pragmatic strand of discourse running through the archival literature. This pragmatic line of thinking is articulated explicitly in Greene and Meissner's (2005) influential concept of 'more product less process' (upon which Anderson and Allen draw).

Greene and Meissner's (2005) 'more product less process' essentially calls for archivists to examine their practice under a cost-benefit lens; with the application of a utilitarian philosophy to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number. For Greene and Meissner (2005), a utilitarian approach is fulfilled through the processing of a greater number of collections, following an argument that wider access benefits the majority of researchers. A cost-benefit trade-off (or sacrifice) is made in terms of level of descriptive detail:

*The key goal of a processing program should be...to maximize the proportion of a repository's holdings available for effective use. It is better to have a high proportion of records with general series-level descriptions than a small proportion with comprehensive item- or folder-level indexes. [emphasis added] (p.210).*

Anderson and Allen (2009) are not alone in seeking to build on Greene and Meissner's (2005) pragmatic views on archival processes. Another influence in Anderson and Allen's approach is acknowledged by them as Evans (2007) who also uses a cost-benefit lens, drawing on a utilitarian philosophy to seek to address the pragmatic issues of how bounded economic resources can most effectively be utilized to meet the problems associated with growing levels of record production and growing public access expectations inherent in an Information Age. However,

rather than archivists readjusting their professional processing activities, as suggested by Greene and Meissner, *being participatory* is put forward by Evans (2007) as the pragmatic solution:

Archivists today are caught between an expanding volume of records and a growing public expectation that every page in every document is online and indexed. With so many records and so few resources to provide on-demand access to them, the problem seems intractable.... This paper introduces the concept of commons-based peer-production as a means of turning collections inside out. It encourages archival institutions to reinvent themselves, and, in collaboration with other archives and with other types of organizations, to organize archival work in concert with a curious and interested public (Evans, 2007, p.391).

The pragmatic underpinning of this version of participation is made abundantly clear by Evans (2007) in his assertion that:

This paper proposes a model for archival activities that systematically reconciles these extremes. Some may see this model as a paradigm shift, but it is no more than a re-articulation of archival principles, refreshed and presented to meet the realities of the information economy and the technological and social climate of the twenty-first century. It is built on the entirely rational assumption that archivists must set priorities and build alliances to be effective in today's information economy. Archivists cannot collect everything and they cannot treat all collections at the same level. Nor can they operate in isolation (p.387).

In this version of the 'participatory archive', the need for a utilitarian cost-benefit analysis to inform decision making on processing is replaced with an economic model resting on market forces. In this model the participants' actions dictate and fulfill the processing within the system. What is processed therefore depends on who has self-defined as a participant and has begun competing, and their degree or type of engagement:

Although archivists familiar with their holdings must certainly be part of the decision-making process, one of the advantages of making all collections known is that researchers' interests and demands create *market forces* that should influence the decisions about additional processing. Indeed, this model argues for a largely demand-driven process that shifts the organization of archival work away from a central, command-and-control model to a more market-oriented approach. It encourages archivists to invite researchers into the decision-making process. What could be more fair and democratic? (Evans, 2007, p. 390).

At this point, I will not delve any deeper behind the philosophical implications of a market-led approach to the 'participatory archive'. However, I am left wondering whether this hints at capitalism, market socialism, or co-operative economics. For

me, the ideology that the market place decides for itself who and what is represented in the archive raises important questions. Evans himself raises the question of fairness and democracy in his market-led approach by suggesting in the above quotation that a market led approach is somehow naturally *fair* and *democratic*. I would suggest that the *fairness* cannot possibly be ascertained or asserted without asking 'who', other than archivists, can become players in the market, and that any un-problematized claim that the market place is naturally *fair* and *democratic* is misleading. Here I am drawing on my readings from the Participatory Action Research literature (PAR), which sees participation as a spatial practice. In particular, the writings of Cornwall (2004) who asserts that:

In this framework, any newly created space quickly comes to be filled with expectations, relationships, institutions and meanings that have been brought from elsewhere, and that impinge upon how that space comes to be experienced. Furthermore, the social and power relationships that exist within the range of domains of association across which people move in the course of their everyday lives intimately affect their ability to *enter* and *exercise* voice in any given participative space. Unless we do more to understand these processes of impingement, and the power relations that imbue these spaces, the best intentioned participatory endeavor *will simply reproduce the status quo* (p.180).

So now I return to the 'archival commons' model but forward by Anderson and Allen (2009), which essentially appears to combine (what I see as) constructivist understandings of the archive (that it is in a perpetual state of becoming; containing multiplicities of meanings and contexts) with the pragmatic line that seeks to address bounded resource allocation and its most effective use. The drawing together of the two seems to culminate in a utopian vision of a *market-led participatory archive*. It is important here to draw out the fact that the market-led approach is justifiable as a utopian vision by the invocation of another emerging assertion within the literature: that archives are *nonrivalrous goods*. I would argue that positioning archives as 'nonrivalrous' enables the profession to side step any uncomfortable implications of allowing participation to play out in a battle of competing forces. Evans (2007), who has acted as inspiration for Anderson and Allen's 'archival commons' model, draws on the work of Benkler (2006) in his justification of the utility (and even perhaps morality) of *market-led participation*:

Benkler examines in detail the economic, social psychology, legal, and industrial engineering principles that undergird this new phenomenon. Some of these issues contribute to a vision for an "archives by the people." Benkler discusses the culture—the mores and social norms—that grow, often from

the community in very democratic ways, for regulating participation and behaviors. He considers how respect for competencies regulates behaviors. In short, his case studies demonstrate that peer-production does work, at least as it applies to information and culture. The key to understanding why it works is to realize that information is a “nonrival” commodity, that is, “its consumption by one person does not diminish its availability for use by any other person” (Evans, 2007, p.396).

Evans is by no means a lone voice in his use of the ‘nonrivalrous’ metaphor, and although archives are ‘nonrivalrous’ in the sense that (once kept and disclosed) they are open to continual use and re-use, I would argue that as commodities they cannot avoid having a rivalrous affect. Even in the realms of ongoing use, their positioning and interpretation by one participant can very much diminish the agency of another who must position their own use in relation to what has gone before. Dominant forces come into play, and processes of marginalization are invoked as some uses become sacred and others appear profane.

### *Pragmatic visions of the ‘participatory’ in interplay with postpositivism*

Leaving this discussion aside momentarily, I would like to draw out from the literature another perspective on being ‘participatory’ that has emerged as a result of archivists seeking to address pragmatic concerns surrounding the archive. Here I see pragmatism in its interplay, not with constructivism, but with postpositivism. The underlying pragmatic issue faced by the profession in relation to finite (and usually low) resource levels, combined with ever expanding collections and audience demands has led to a vision of the ‘participatory’ tinged with postpositivist ideology in which participation is enacted in order to meet clearly defined, set and standardized workload targets. Eveleigh (2012) describes this form of ‘participatory archive’ through a ‘transcription machine’ metaphor in which:

Quality control becomes a matter of consecutive processing up through a hierarchical chain of command, combined with double (or sometimes triple) entry, statistical sampling and automated error detection. The emphasis is on bureaucratic or administrative control over user input, which is characterized by the reductive nature of both the participative task and of contributors’ fleeting commitment to that task and to each other. Participants are, in effect, expected to behave as if they were parts of a metadata-processing assembly line, and the issues of motivating participants to take part in ‘transcription machines’, and of rewarding performance, come to be understood as a competitive game. (p. 6).

I will not dwell on this form of participation in any great depth here, but for the time being will simply acknowledge its existence as another mode of being ‘participatory’

*Participatory visions of the 'participatory'*

I will, instead, pick up on the line of argument that I am developing around the misconception that is perpetuated through the view of archives as a 'nonrival' commodity that has emerged from the interplay between pragmatic and constructivist worldviews.

I believe these tensions are actively addressed and exposed in the archival literature through an engagement with a participatory worldview. I have already used Shilton and Srinivasan's (2007) vision of the 'participatory archive' so for illustrative breadth I will focus on participatory models that are beginning to be articulated out of work to address concerns around archival issues and Indigenous human rights in the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. McKemmish et al (2010; 2011) focus on the Australian landscape, where there has been a move to come to terms with the historical injustices of the past in relation to Indigenous communities in particular in response to the colonization that saw up to 50,000 indigenous children being forcibly removed from their families, representing a 'stolen generation' in Australian history. Following a Government apology and an engagement with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, archival sources relating to these past injustices have fallen under scrutiny. The rivalrous nature of archives is beginning to be drawn out through an examination of Western archival and legal frameworks that assert who has the ability to control, disclose, access and use these records. The ways in which these frameworks restrict the self-determination and freedom of the Indigenous communities who appear as 'subjects' in the records, has begun to be surfaced by some within the Australian professional archival community. Within this group of professionals, there is now recognition that because these frameworks place Indigenous Australians as 'subjects' rather than 'creators' of the records, the Indigenous Australians are afforded few rights, in particular ownership rights, which stem from legal notions of authorship. From within this group of professionals, there has been an explicit attempt to explore and expose the ways in which archival systems that are based on conventional understandings of the relationship between record subjects (as third parties) and record creators (as the principal parties to the record transaction) leads to a subjugation of the rights of the former. This privileging of one party above another has significant implications in terms of the right to 'control' the record, and is particularly pertinent to archival processes where finite

decisions between one course of action and another come to the fore (as opposed to processes such as description where multiplicity is possible). In direct recognition of these issues, an advocacy position has been articulated by this group of professionals, encapsulated by McKemmish et al (2010; 2011) who have sought to establish an alternative approach to negotiating rights. This alternative approach is articulated as a participant relationship model, which acknowledges all parties to a transaction as immediate parties with negotiated rights and responsibilities. Acceptance and use of such a model would represent a landmark transformation in archival frameworks of control. In highlighting these issues, the rhetoric used by McKemmish et al is in keeping with a participatory worldview as articulated by Creswell, in as much as it seeks to address injustice and invoke transformation. Indeed, a call for action is made by McKemmish et al in a special edition of *Archival Science* (2012) in which the editors state:

In this context, it is imperative for archivists to become more aware of the Indigenous human rights agenda and to ensure that archival principles and practices address the archival dimensions of that agenda.... Our hope is that this special issue of *Archival Science* will support the development of action agendas around the world that embed Indigenous human rights into the professional responsibilities, culture and practices of archival and records communities (p.112).

Significantly in the context of this argument, writers from other fields (Bowrey and Anderson, 2009), who also advocate for Indigenous rights, are actively problematizing the current push towards open-knowledge communities, the public domain, the creative commons and public policies that seek to protect the global sharing of information and resources. Bowrey and Anderson (2009) argue that visions of the 'participatory' that rest on a commons agenda oscillate 'around concepts such as "freedom", "public", "openness", "sharing" and "commons"' (p.480) and yet:

Participants in the debates regarding the commons...are establishing (and then policing) the thresholds and boundaries between differing versions and visions of the past, of "us" and "them" and of what is available to be claimed for use and by whom'. Such terms, despite their appearance and constantly shifting nature, are not and have never been wholly inclusive of peoples, perspectives or cultures. Their borders are managed in order to establish normative orders for inclusion and participation. This reality runs like a fault-line through these movements, connecting them together in important ways, while at the same time compromising their promise to change the global knowledge cultures. For their successes their must now be a serious commitment to understanding and acknowledging the ongoing instances where these movements, sometimes unwittingly, repeat historical exclusions.

The ethos of freedom, public, openness and commons is problematic because it does not properly deal with the baggage of the past (p.480).

An illustration provided by Bowrey and Anderson (2009) eloquently sums up the issues connected to un-problematized calls for the 'participatory archive' that are based around a constructivist vision in which global open access is coupled with processes of continual re-use and re-contextualization. The illustration draws on the work of Kinnane (2004) and surfaces that:

Until the early 1990s when Aboriginal people such as myself started documenting our communities in film, there was an estimated six thousand hours of material created *about* our communities, of which perhaps ten hours actually involved some Aboriginal input. It is the same with images that were taken to document our communities in missions, in Settlements and in camps – they are not the images that we would have chosen to represent ourselves (p.257).

Here I arrive at the heart of the radical opposition between visions of the 'participatory archive' built purely around constructivist as opposed to participatory worldviews. In the archival context, constructivist participatory models such as Anderson and Allen's (2009) 'archival commons' have emerged and when infused with pragmatism have become aligned to the premise that archives are 'non-rivalrous' (Anderson and Allen, 2009) and there is no 'other' (Huvila, 2008). Everyone is invited, everyone is equal, there is 'no first order, of order' (p.30). It is hugely appealing to deny the dichotomies of inside and out, included and excluded, macro and micro. It removes the needs to address politics and power, and side steps a whole host of difficult and awkward tensions around justice and equality. However, it is ultimately a flawed position. Taking the example from the above quotation, if these archives (representations of Aboriginal life made without Aboriginal input) become part of Anderson and Allen's (2009) envisioned archival commons, no matter how diverse the participation is in and around these records, no matter how polymorphic the discourse can become, the simple existence of these records creates a rivalry in which issues of dominance and control are inextricably linked. The processes associated with the decision to keep these archives, coupled with the decision to open them up for peer production, these are not neutral decisions and they are not unconscious decisions. These acts are infused with political undertones, in which the rights of some are taken over and above the rights of others. Such acts cannot simply be balanced or negated through subsequent use and re-use, or the adding of additional descriptions and resources through a constructivist participatory approach. Participatory models that are based around a

denial of the rivalrous nature of archives are incapable of engaging with and addressing these issues. In contrast, it is these very issues that form the basis of what I am distinguishing as a 'participatory' vision of the 'participatory archive'.

It is perhaps possible to draw on critiques of Employee Involvement in Participation (EIP) in participatory management discourse to highlight the growing unease I have with the way the 'participatory archive' is presented in constructivist-based archival models of knowledge production. The easy adoption of rhetoric around 'democratization' and 'fairness' within the discourse suggests a radical, and even political approach, to a process that in reality is in fact 'conservative'. In participatory management, it is argued that management discourse on EIP 'frames' the subject in such a way to close off more fundamental notions of participation, by presenting as radical and fundamental a version of being 'participatory' that is essentially non-threatening to powerful interests. Among academics and consultants, for example, post-Fordist and post-industrial 'paradigms' are represented as radical transformations of the organization of work, leading to inevitable democratization of work practices (Matthews 1989). However, such paradigm shifts actually leave existing macro power relations undisturbed. The practitioner management literature is replete with examples of how the enthusiasm and hype for the initiatives of EIP draw attention away from its restrictive 'framing'. Is this what constructivist visions of the 'participatory archive' are leading to in an archival context?

### *Clarifying the distinctions*

My analysis given above seeks to articulate my growing appreciation that despite similar calls to 'fairness' and 'democracy', there is an important ideological separation between the 'participatory archive' based on a broadly constructivist position and that undertaken from a broadly participatory worldview. As my appreciation has developed, I have engaged in a deeper comparison of the two worldviews (constructivist and participatory) to try to draw out and articulate the distinction further.

I have found the writing of Guba and Lincoln (2005) useful in clarifying my own understanding of the distinctions. Lincoln and Guba have sought to draw out a comparison between what they call competing inquiry paradigms (which I am referring to as worldviews); juxtaposing the ontology, epistemology and methodology



attached to different paradigms, as well as analyzing the paradigms in relation to a range of practical research issues. Table 2.1 summarizes my own comparison of 'participatory' and 'constructivist' worldviews, which has been directly influenced by the broader comparisons made by Guba and Lincoln's (2005) analysis.

There is a closeness between the two positions on epistemology and ontology that is worth noting. Both offer an alternative to positivism and see reality as constructed. In a participatory worldview this constructed reality is often considered in relation to dominant social, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values that serve to create a pervading view of how things are. It is through these constructed values that we come to define ourselves, others and the world around us. The participatory ontology focuses on how consciousness of the influence of these values, and the realities in which we operate can have a transformative effect (helping us to create new and less oppressive realities for ourselves and others). In constructivism, the focus is on individual, local and specific constructions of realities. There is explicit recognition of the interplay with society and culture in the formation of realities, as well as a recognition that realities are open to shift and change (constant revisionism), but there is no specific impetus for the process of creation/revelation to be transformative.

In epistemological terms, both worldviews see knowledge as transactional and subjectivist. Knowledge is created rather than objectively grasped, and there is no universal 'truth' but many 'truths'. However, there is an epistemological difference in that there is a process of value mediation within the participatory worldview. It is not enough to construct/reveal knowledge for the sake of it. Its emancipatory purpose is vital. Knowledge that actively leads to freedom and flourishing is valued and sought.

These distinctions (in the ontological and epistemological stance behind the worldviews) lead to variance in the methodological approach. In the participatory worldview, methodology must specifically address the 'who', 'what' and 'how' of knowledge production. In doing so, the boundaries of what can be explored, or how knowledge production should progress, are actively reflected upon and collaboratively shaped. In constructivism, the boundaries of knowledge production are also shaped and changed by the process of construction, but the crucial difference is that the shifts emerge (somewhat passively) from the evolving process, rather than through a proactive cycle of reflecting and shaping.

These differences are perhaps neatly summarized by the aims behind the worldviews. The participatory worldview is inextricably connected to critique and transformation, as well as restitution and emancipation. Whereas the constructivist worldview aims to facilitate the emergence of understanding, through the (re)construction of meaning in specific contexts.

### *Tying the threads together*

Having reached an understanding on the ideological differences between different versions of the 'participatory' presented within the archival discourse, I had also reached an internal understanding that it was the participatory worldview that I wanted to explore through my research. This was a personal positioning in reaction to the discourse. I found it increasingly impossible and undesirable to deny or seek to negate the issues of politics and power connected to envisioning the 'participatory'. Taking a participatory worldview, meant adopting a framework in which I would actively confront and negotiate these issues. The questions of importance that were emerging for me were related to the translation of this worldview into practice. How can a participatory worldview on the 'participatory archive' be instigated in an institutional context such as the Wellcome Library? What tensions and questions emerge from seeking to undertake a participatory worldview approach to archival practice?

<i>Item</i>	Participatory	Constructivism
Ontology	Historical realism – virtual reality shaped by social, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; crystalized over time	Relativism – local and specific constructed realities
Epistemology	Transactional/subjectivist value mediated knowledge	Transactional/subjectivist created knowledge
Broad methodology	Dialogic/dialectical  Active reflection on boundaries; who, what, how is knowledge formed?  Move towards collaborative and proactive setting and shaping of the boundaries	Hermeneutical/dialectical  Boundaries are shaped and changed through process; who, what, how emerges but is not consciously constructed or necessarily considered
Aim of participation	Critique and transformation; restitution and emancipation	Understanding; meaning construction/reconstruction
Nature of generated knowledge	Structural/historical insights	Construction/reconstruction coalescing
Knowledge accumulation	Historical revisionism	Variety and multiplicity of reconstructions
Goodness or quality criteria	Historical situatedness; erosion of ignorance; action stimulus	Trustworthiness and authenticity

**Table 2.2: Worldview distinctions on a range of ontological, epistemological, methodological and practical issues**

Adapted from Guba and Lincoln (2005) p.194-195

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### Examining a ‘participatory worldview’ in relation to action research

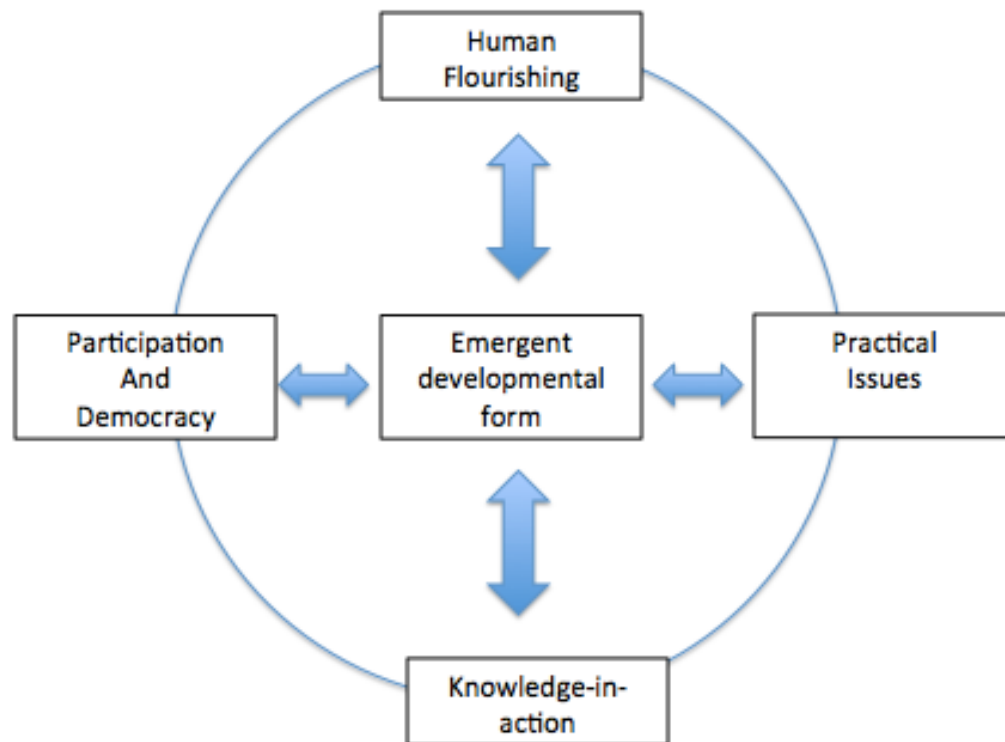
At this point in the development of my research, I had engaged with worldviews at a broad level. Building from Creswell’s (1994) articulation of four worldviews, I had sought to draw out the broad differences between these worldviews and apply them to how the ‘participatory archive’ is conceived within professional archival discourse. I had used Creswell’s four worldviews as an analytical lens, focusing closely on drawing out a distinction between constructivist and participatory approaches to participation. Having made this distinction, I articulated that it was the construction of a ‘participatory archive’ undertaken from a *participatory* stance that would be the focus of my action research. However, I had yet to analyze or articulate in any depth what it might mean to take a *participatory* stance. I felt I needed to tease out and disentangle the potential assumptions and nuances inherent in taking a *participatory* approach.

Out of my reading into action research, I became acquainted with the writings of Reason and Bradbury (2001) who have articulated a detailed account of their version of a participatory worldview in the introduction to their edited book: *The Handbook of Action Research*. My engagement with their writing will be presented here because it was pivotal in raising formative questions and tensions for me about placing my use of action research, and my taking of a *participatory* stance, within their articulation of a participatory worldview. Through a process of questioning and exploring, I came to a better and more focused articulation of how I distinguish research and practice that is undertaken from a participatory perspective. Fundamentally, I found the process of engagement with Reason and Bradbury’s work was useful in forcing me to explicitly engage with sorting through questions on epistemology and ontology raised by considerations of worldviews, as well as questions on the extent to which any explicitly articulated worldview can be fully adopted from the outset as a formative framework for research. Ultimately, it led me to be able to articulate with more clarity the position from which I was making distinctions, from which my research design proceeded.

On encountering Reason and Bradbury’s work, I had already identified action research as a useful methodological approach in my research design. To find that Reason and Bradbury’s articulation of action research was positioned in what they referred to as a ‘participatory worldview’ held a lot of promise for me. Could I use

their detailed epistemological and ontological articulation of the 'participatory' as the basis on which I myself would proceed?

Reason and Bradbury begin their fusion of action research in a participatory worldview by introducing an action research model in which the first four features of action research are 'practical issues', 'knowledge-in-action', 'participation and democracy', and 'human flourishing', which all have a two-way relationship to the last feature of action research which is labeled as 'emergent developmental form' (Figure 2.1). I will explore these features in turn, and offer my initial thoughts on the significance of these features, and the questions and tensions that were arising for me from their consideration.



**Figure 2.1: Reason and Bradbury's (2001) Characteristics of Action Research**

Reproduced from Reason and Bradbury (2001) p.2

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Starting then with the model's first feature of action research, which Reason and Bradbury label as 'practical issues'. My reading of the divergent literature on action research had indicated that action research is often centered on identifying an existing issue that is framed as a problem, which then leads to developing action to

bring about improvement or change - although the concreteness of the problem, and the level at which it is identified, is necessarily variable. In many cases, the problem may be rooted in existing actions and processes that are leading to undesirable outcomes where the link or causal relationship between action and outcome is relatively concrete. In systems language, these are problems where the boundary is drawn at a micro level where few sub-systems exist and the environment is expansive. However, in other cases, the problem can be far more abstract and difficult to pinpoint in terms of cause and effect. For example, the problem may be a group who appear disengaged and apathetic. In such cases, the boundary is necessarily drawn at a macro level, encompassing many micro systems, which might be contributing to the issue but seem complex in their relationship to each other or are seemingly chaotic. In such cases the research might seek to focus on changing one existing micro system (to make the boundary smaller), or it might focus on producing an apparently new set of actions by creating an entirely new micro-system within the macro in the hope that the new system will contribute to break the chain of wider system relationships. In all cases the practical element is undeniable and is at the core of not only the purpose but also the process and outcome of the research. For me this raised a fundamental question on the extent to which action research can be seen as emergent. Does the initial identification and framing of the problem (the identification of system and drawing of the boundary) mean the research is always inherently constrained and bounded? My initial thoughts were that the answer was no, with a caveat. The caveat being that, in research, there is always a starting point around which the research is constructed and in some senses therefore constrained. However, the practical action and the stress on the relationship between action and reflection means that there is huge potential for boundaries, constraints and framing to move in the course of the research. Indeed, in Figure 1.2, we can literally see the 'mechanics' of how such movement could be achieved. The movement is possible because action research is 'in the moment' and because reflection is allowed to influence action in a cyclical relationship. Furthermore, the inextricable link of purpose, process and outcome united in praxis results in a continual negotiation, as each leads into each other, and into a constant circuit of repositioning. There is great potential for movement, flux and change within the parameters of the research, and it therefore becomes possible to see the two-way link between 'practical issues' and 'emergent developmental form'.

However, tensions began to emerge for me as I moved round the model to the next central feature: 'knowledge-in-action'. I was particularly challenged by the explanatory text offered by Reason and Bradbury (2001) in relation to the model that asserts:

The *purpose* of knowledge-making is so rarely debated. The institutions of normal science and academia, which have created such a monopoly on the knowledge-making process, place a primary value on pure research, the creation of knowledge unencumbered by practical questions. In contrast, the primary purpose of action research is not to produce academic theories based on action; nor is it to produce theories about action; nor is it to produce theoretical or empirical knowledge that can be applied in action; it is to liberate the human body, mind and spirit in the search for a better, freer world (p.2).

I was (and still am) positioned in an academic setting and was wanting to use action research to fulfill the requirements of a PhD, so this argument felt distinctly uncomfortable. My view of action research was that it either builds new knowledge or it draws on existing knowledge to enable 'sensemaking'. This 'sensemaking' or the application of meaning to action is an inextricable part of the purpose, process and outcomes of the research. The close integration between praxis and knowledge is achieved through the continual application of the planning, action and reflection cycle. The fluidity gained from being 'in the moment' opens the door to the constant negotiation, and re-negotiation of the developing understanding which points to the link between 'knowledge in action' and the 'emergent developmental form' of the research. However, if the knowledge doesn't *primarily* seek to question, prove, disprove or construct theory, then can it be evaluated for academic purposes? It follows that its evaluation has to be part of its praxis, and its praxis has to be its evaluation. Arguably, although knowledge production and theory may not be the research's primary purpose, it will necessarily be an emergent property of the research. The sense making that is embodied in the action/reflection cycle is what makes the research meaningful. It follows that its primary purpose (which for Reason and Bradbury is liberation and a freer world) becomes its benchmark. In assessing the research against its benchmark, I began to see that an in depth examination of epistemology with an appreciation of the nuances of knowledge production will be an embodied part of the research process and part of its 'emergent developmental form'. Still though, I was left with the broader question about the primary purpose of the research as articulated by Reason and Bradbury in their participatory worldview:

the higher purpose of liberation in the quest for a better, freer world. I was asking myself whether such idealism could be a sound basis for research.

Moving to Reason and Bradbury's next central feature 'participation and democracy'. Reason and Bradbury argue that 'action research is only possible *with, for and by* persons and communities, ideally involving all stakeholders both in the questioning and sensemaking that informs the research *and in the action*' (p.4). However, this led me into a complex set of questions on how to evaluate the resulting participation. Is it about depth or breadth? Is it about degrees of control? Is it about who participates? Where does the boundary of democracy start and end, and who falls inside or outside its bounds? If 'participation and democracy' is a central tenet of the research, then it follows that the evaluation of the boundaries of participation and democracy must form a part of the planning, action, and reflection cycle so that a critical understanding of the boundaries informs the 'emergent developmental form' of the knowledge-in-action.

For me, the same cycle of questions emerged from a consideration of Reason and Bradbury's fourth feature in their model: 'human flourishing'. However, I found that this feature sat particularly uncomfortably with me, as it seemed to be a vague and rather abstract aspiration. However, in unpacking its potential significance and validity I returned to the practical premise of action research and its central alignment to the solving of problems. The purpose, process and outcomes of action research are (for Reason and Bradbury) bounded to a fundamental desire for real-world improvement. For them, research should be primarily concerned with enabling positive change. This change is constructed, mediated and evaluated through the action-reflection process; and it is through the action-reflection process that liberation, freedom, participation, and democracy can be achieved. I was drawn to consider human flourishing as evaluable only through an examination of the boundaries around freedom and constraint. If that was the case, then an evaluation of the boundaries as part of the planning, action and reflection cycle might enable human flourishing to be a feature of the research as a purpose, process and outcome that could be continually critically evaluated as part of the 'in the moment' knowledge-in-action.

Having identified the tenets that underpin action research, Reason and Bradbury (2001) then go on to a detailed account of the participatory worldview within which



their stance on action research sits (p.3-11). Reason and Bradbury believe that a 'participatory worldview' undercuts the foundations of an empirical-positivist worldview that has arguably been the foundation of Western inquiry. They locate the development of this worldview as part of the shift from a modern to a postmodern world and as an extension of the 'language turn' that has been part of the postmodern movement (p.4-5). In this vein, the participatory worldview set forth by Reason and Bradbury is broadly consistent with the articulation of a participatory stance that I have presented thus far.

According to Reason and Bradbury research in the West has been seeped in a positivist worldview, a view that sees science as separate from everyday life, and the researcher as subject within a world of separate objects. In this perspective, there is a real world, made up of real things that we can identify. These real things operate according to natural causal laws, which govern their behavior; laws that can be deduced by analyzing the component parts. Mind and reality are separate, and the rational human, drawing on analytical thought and experimental methods, can come to know the objective world. Reason and Bradbury (2001) highlight that central to the modernist worldview is a metaphor of linear progress, absolute truth and rational planning (Harvey, 1990). They argue that in seeking objective truth, the modern worldview cannot accommodate the possibility of connecting knowledge and power. Therefore, Reason and Bradbury start from the position, argued extensively elsewhere, that the positivist worldview has outlived its usefulness. They align their worldview with that of Habermas in the pronouncement that 'modernism is dead' (Reason and Bradbury, 2001, p.4).

Reason and Bradbury (2001) build their construction of a participatory worldview on the linguistic and cognitive turns that have emerged from the social sciences and humanities since the 1960s, which they see as bringing to mainstream scholarship the Kantian differentiation between the world itself and interpreted experience of the world. The cognitive turn focuses on the schemata, or mental models and structures, which allow sensemaking of the world. The linguistic turn, rediscovers Nietzsche's sense of language as an army of metaphors, and turns the spotlight on the role of language in the constructions of experience (Reason and Bradbury, 2001, p.5). Reason and Bradbury point to the arguments of Van Maanen to highlight the postmodern view that the world may not exist outside of our [human] construction of it. As argued by Van Maanen (1995, p.134):

No longer then is something like an organization or, for that matter, an atom or quark thought to come first while our understandings, models or representations of an organization, atom, or quark come second. Rather, our representations may well come first, allowing us to selectively see what we have described (Reason and Bradbury, 2001, p.5).

Reason and Bradbury draw the researcher close to the extreme postmodernist position that suggests that the world is evoked always and only in a dance of signs (Derrida, 1981). They highlight that the deconstructive sentiment challenges illusions of any kind of certainty and pulls apart the possibility of absolute truth in any overarching theory and paradigm. They draw on Lyotard's assertion that it evokes a distrust in metanarratives (Lyotard, 1984), and suggest that the constructivist position can be similarly aligned in its articulation that there is no accessible reality behind 'the text' which is the immediate expression of human understanding that we have in front of us. They draw in on a position which articulates that truth can never be securely laid or built. From this position, as explained by Reason and Bradbury, knowledge is not disinterested but is constructed, contested, incessantly perspectival and polyphonic. Interestingly, Reason and Bradbury (2001) suggest that constructivist perspectives point to the researcher's complicity in the constitution of their objects of study, and the interested nature of knowledge making, emphasizing the intimate nature of knowledge and power, and how knowledge making is supported by various cultural and political forms, thus creating a reality that favours those that hold power (p.6). Following, my analysis in the previous section in which I explore the 'participatory archive' as approached from a constructivist stance, I would suggest that although the constructivist perspective does turn its back on impartiality and neutrality and openly acknowledges (and even seeks to expose) the complicities within knowledge making, it does not necessarily actively seek to change or influence these complicit outcomes in the same way that research and action taken from a *participatory* stance does.

Reason and Bradbury (2001) argue that the deconstructive and poststructuralist perspectives (with which they are aligning constructivism) are built on a worldview that sees the word as 'text' (p.6). Although it is important to acknowledge (which is not necessarily done by Reason and Bradbury) that the metaphor of text alludes to the richness of human expression beyond language. For me, the deconstructive and poststructuralist metaphor of the world as 'text' becomes a paradox as it points

simultaneously to infinite meaninglessness and rootlessness, with its denial of absolutism, but at the same time infinite possibility and freedom in its assertion of human construction unbounded by objective reality. If reality cannot oppress then it is only the social nature of construction that produces limitation, it is in our relationship with others that we find our freedoms and constraints.

For Reason and Bradbury, the constructivist worldview provides important insights into the myth of the modernist world and the human construction of what has been previously believed to be untainted truth and objective reality. However, for Reason and Bradbury, it is unsatisfactory in its circling around relativist construction and its denial of a grounding reality. They articulate ontological and epistemological distinctions between the constructivist worldview and their participatory worldview which are more fully explained in Reason and Heron (1997) in which direct comparisons between a constructivist stance (as they see it) and their developing participatory worldview are made. Essentially, from their viewpoint, a constructivist position is not clear enough in its articulation of the relationship between an objective reality (what is sometime referred to in constructivist literature as 'tangible entities') and subjective construction:

There is an immediate difficulty with the idea that reality is a construction within an individual mind. It raises the problem of solipsism, which is an ironic problem for a science of the Other. For if reality is nothing but an internal mental construct, no warrant can be given for supposing that the other people being studied actually exist, let alone for supposing that the researcher's view of them adequately represents their own view of their situation. However, Guba and Lincoln are ambiguous in their account of constructivism. They also say that the mental constructions are related to 'tangible entities', which would thus appear to have some reality independent of the constructions (Schwandt, 1994, p.134). So their explicit idealist stance seems to rest on an implicit realism, and leaves the paradigm in a state of wobble (Reason and Heron, 1997, p.10).

For Reason and Bradbury (2001) it is ecology that challenges the constructivist view of the world as a subjective construction. Drawing on the writings of Abram (1996), Reason and Bradbury argue that ecology points to human embeddedness in a more-than-human world. For Reason and Bradbury (2001) there is a deeper structure of reality, which is bounded to human representation and relationship. It is from this positioning that they build the participatory worldview (p.6).

Reason and Bradbury describe the emergent worldview as participatory in its assertion that the world is made up of co-authored relationships. Fundamentally these relationships are not just human-to-human, but are between what they describe as 'the primeval givenness of the cosmos and human feeling and construing'. Therefore, humans and communities, co-construct the world and are simultaneously embodied in the world. As such, this participatory worldview takes the middle ground between the positivism of modern times and what Reason and Bradbury portray as the constructivist alternative, in that it draws on and integrates both paradigms. It follows positivism in its argument that there is a 'real' reality described as a 'primeval givenness of being' (of which we partake), but draws on the constructivist perspective in acknowledging that as soon as we attempt to articulate this we enter a world of human expression. Any given account of the cosmos is culturally framed, yet crucially, the participatory perspective argues that if inquiry is approached with the appropriate critical skills and discipline, the account may provide some perspective on what is universal, while acknowledging the knowledge construction process that frames the account (p.6-7).

For Reason and Bradbury, the participatory worldview is holistic in its assertion that the cosmos is a seamless whole in which the parts are constantly in touch with each other, and embodied within each other. Reason and Bradbury (2001) draw on pan-experientialist philosophy to suggest that matter and consciousness are not ontologically separate but are mutually complementary and intertwined realities. From this perspective, mind and matter are phases in a process; mind being the dynamic form inherent in the matter itself:

Mind is the self-becoming, the self-organization – the self creation of matter. Without this matter could never produce the mind. Consciousness and matter, mind and body, subject and object, process and subject...always go together. They are a unity, a nondual duality (p.8).

Within this perspective, human persons are centers of consciousness both independent and linked in a generative web of communion both with other humans and the rest of creation (Heron, 1971). I was intrigued by the suggestion that matter cannot exist without mind and mind without matter. There is mind and there is matter, but an attempt to separate them is futile in view of their symbiotic relationship. Matter constructs, re-orders and re-creates and the mind constructs, re-orders and re-creates and neither is mutually exclusive but each has this potential,

and in the continual unity between mind and matter we have the cosmos. It is, therefore, the ontological separation of mind and matter that forces a divergence between postmodern and positivist paradigms. However, at this point in my exploration, I began to lose confidence in the participatory worldview as put forward by Reason and Bradbury. In particular I could not align my own thinking with Reason and Bradbury's (2001) premise that:

Reality emerges through a co-creative dance of the human bodymind and the given cosmos; while this latter is fundamentally present we can only know it through our relational constructions and sensitivities (p.8).

In grappling with this participatory worldview, I felt distinctly unsettled by some of the language it uses and the directions in which its arguments lead, and I have had to try and reflect on the reasons why this is the case. Some of the discomfort I felt at the time were connected to associations I was making with certain words such as 'cosmos' which I naturally associated with New Age spirituality - a belief system that I would never choose to subscribe to. The following quotation from Reason and Bradbury (2001) made particularly uncomfortable reading for me:

The universe carries with it a psychic-spiritual as well as a physical-material dimension....the human activates the most profound dimension of the universe, its capacity to reflect on and celebrate itself in conscious self awareness (p.9).

The conclusion in this quotation felt like a step too far for me in its evocation of the psychic and spiritual. It raised fundamental questions for me. In seeking to unpack the feeling of discomfort, I realized that it is the very fact that Reason and Bradbury were seeking to articulate an *all encompassing worldview* that made it particularly challenging to engage with. In embracing this worldview, I could not compartmentalize my own belief systems and undertake the research as a separate endeavor. Instead I was being drawn to unite them and in doing so embrace the research as encompassing all aspects and dimensions of myself, and what I think it is to be human and live in the world. This seemed even more complex in relation to the fact that the research was being done to meet the requirements of a PhD. At this point, I felt unable to fully articulate my own ontological and epistemological stance. I was unsure of how any of my intellectual questions tied in with other aspects of myself. Spirituality, faith and belief, seemed intensely personal to me, and I did not believe I could analyze these aspects of myself in the context of academic research. Yet at the same time I recognized the paradox in myself; that I had been drawn to

the theme of the 'participatory' precisely because I knew it would lead to an engagement with fundamental questions that would make the research feel meaningful and worthwhile. At this point in the research process I could not resolve these tensions so I leave them open here.

At this point, it is necessary to articulate where examining Reason and Bradbury's (2001) work left me. I felt there was much within their articulation of action research from a participatory worldview that was useful, particularly the notion that the concepts of 'participation', 'democracy', and 'human flourishing' that are bound up in the participatory rhetoric must be continually interrogated as part of the action research process. However, I found it impossible to come to a point of either agreement or disagreement on the ontological and epistemological distinctions that they were seeking to align with 'participatory' research and practice. This inability to commit in totality to their perspectives placed me in opposition to the very idea of a *total alignment to an all encompassing worldview* in a research context. Is reality a subjective construction? I felt I would never fully know the answer; therefore an endless circling around this philosophical issue in order to position myself into their particular 'participatory worldview' seemed futile. I felt I could not be exact on questions of ontology and epistemology.

However, I felt that a distinction *is* usefully made between broadly constructivist and broadly participatory research and practice, and I felt I had begun to draw this distinction out from my reading of the archival literature and my comparison of constructivist and participatory worldviews. Rather than making the distinction on ontological and epistemological grounds (like Reason and Bradbury); I saw the distinction in terms of the presence or absence of advocacy, transformation, revisionism or problem solving within the research. For me, participatory research was distinguishable because its start and end points are to address, challenge and revise: 'to make things better than they were before'. I was summing the distinction up in the following terms: constructivist research and practice seeks deep and rich understandings of ourselves, our society and our world; participatory research and practice seeks transformation of ourselves, our society and our world. I sensed the existence of a sliding scale between the two, and instinctively believed that these stances are not mutually exclusive. For example, constructivist research and practice may well lead to transformation and a better status quo (even if this isn't its primary aim). Similarly, participatory practice will often include the construction of

deep and rich understanding. However, I felt drawing out a distinction around a participatory stance was useful and productive, and it is from within that distinction that I wanted to position my research.

### Defining my research interest

I felt I had reached a position of clarity that I wanted to focus on exploring participation from a *participatory* perspective. I aimed to do this by instigating a local instance of transformative *participatory practice* in line with the distinction I had begun to draw out. Broadly speaking, I wanted to use this local and contextualized instance to provide an in-depth and rich analysis on the implications and challenges inherent in taking this approach.

### Exploring Participatory Action Research

I will now introduce another thread of exploration, reflection and assimilation that influenced my emergent ideas, the end result of which was a tightening of the coherence around my emerging research design. In seeking to understand and deepen my knowledge in relation to social research that is undertaken from a *participatory* perspective, I became aware that the notion of the 'participatory' forms part of the theoretical discourse around social research methodology, and is therefore conceptualized across a variety of communities of practice, particularly in the fields of Education, Policy, Health, Development and Governance. Distinguishing 'participatory approaches' is also a prevalent phenomenon in discourses on human resources in the spheres of corporate business and management. These cross-disciplinary discourses are often drawn together and articulated under the banner of an emerging social research methodology known as Participatory Action Research (PAR). Although each discipline tends to give PAR a unique flavor, and inevitably positions its emergence and history differently according to each unique disciplinary perspective, there is a commonality of purpose and approach that is embodied across the PAR literature. Although I read about PAR across the disciplines that theorize about it, I first came across it by following references through the literature in Development Studies, so that initial bias will inevitably come across in my presentation of it here. Having discovered PAR, and the growing body of literature that has formalized it into a research methodology, I felt a necessity to align and assimilate my emerging ideas in relation to this discourse.

### ***Defining Participatory Action Research***

From my perspective, PAR represents the embodiment of a participatory purpose coupled with a participatory methodology. It has a participatory *purpose* in that it is explicitly orientated towards social transformation. This participatory purpose is achieved through a participatory methodology in which *collaboration* is put at the center of a process of research, education, and action. PAR strives to embody a democratic commitment to break the monopoly on who holds knowledge, and for whom social research can be undertaken (purpose), by explicitly collaborating with marginalized or vulnerable others (methodology) (Kindon et al, 2007).

### ***Methodological considerations associated with Participatory Action Research***

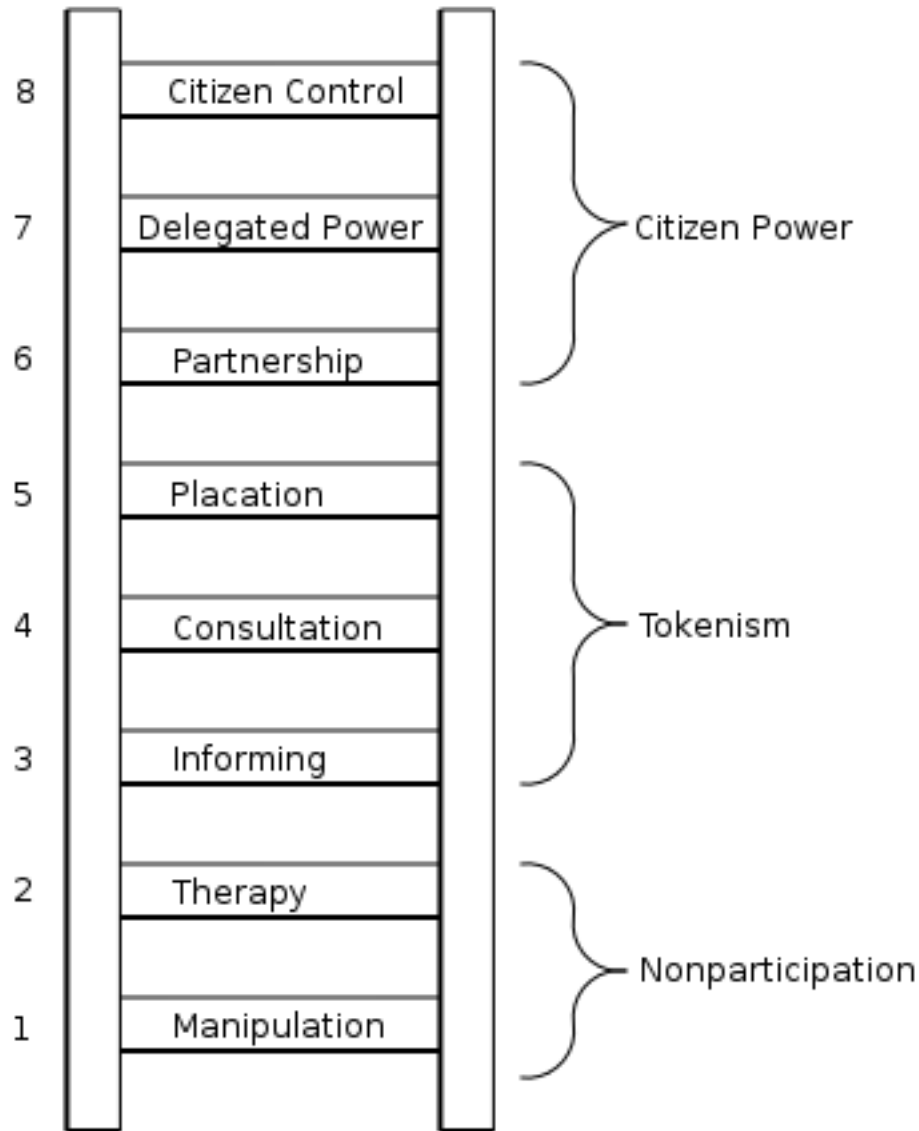
Within PAR the nature of the *collaboration* is fundamental to the development of the research methodology. Through my reading of the literature, I would suggest that three methodological considerations in relation to *collaboration* come under active and continued scrutiny within a PAR framework: 1) Who is included? 2) What is the relationship between participants? 3) What is the nature of the participants' involvement? The latter of these considerations seeks to assess the degree of freedom within the project for the participants to shape and push the boundaries of the project itself, to become active decision makers and controllers of the aims, objectives and outcomes. It also includes a consideration of the degree to which the project is, or can become, self-mobilizing and self-sustaining.

### ***Exploring typologies of Participatory Action Research***

Within the literature on PAR, typologies have been developed to help articulate the concept of participatory involvement, and these do bring forward some important issues for consideration. As a starting point I am using three typologies that I have found within the development literature to discuss how 'collaboration' is viewed from within PAR.

One of the first, and most frequently referred to typologies in a development context was developed by Arnstein (1969) as shown in Figure 2.2.





**Figure 2.2: Arnstein's (1969) Eight Rungs of a Ladder of Citizen Participation**

Reproduced from Arnstein (1969) p.217

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The typology is framed not around the implementing agency but the experience of the participants. Citizen power is the result of the top rung of the ladder achieved through 'citizen control', 'delegated power' and partnership'. Citizen power is the 'nirvana' of the participatory process, the idealized end result where citizens are emancipated from the need to rely on implementing agencies.

A similar construct is present in a typology offered by Pretty (Table 2.3). Pretty's (1995) typology is not designed to be as normative as Arnstein's construction, it is more of a continuum, recognizing that different parts of a single participative project might rest on different areas of the model. In this model we see 'self-mobilized participation' in which:

People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for the resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used (p.1251).

It could be argued that citizen power and self-mobilized participation find their closest association in an archival context with community archives. Community archives is a collective term that describes the grass roots activities of (and the materials generated by) self-defined groups engaged in telling their history. Research into community archives illustrates the variety in approaches and motivations that exist across the spectrum of groups engaged in community archives. However, commonality can be found in a strong ethos of independence and autonomy, and the identification of a role in telling a story that otherwise might not be told (Flinn 2007).

The position of community archives in relation to formal heritage and archival institutions can be close or distant. Some community archives begin from an initiative from a mainstream heritage or governmental body, but many emerge organically. Research has highlighted that across the spectrum of community archives, there is openness to working with formal heritage organizations, but there is a strong sense that collaboration has to be on the terms of the community in a way that does not compromise independence (Flinn et al, 2009).

Type	Characteristics of each type
Manipulative participation	Participation is simply a pretense, with representatives on official boards who are un-elected and have no power.
Passive participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.
Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information-gathering processes, and so control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
Participation for material incentives	People participate by contributing resources, for example, labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. It is very common to see this 'called' participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end.
Functional participation	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents. At worst, local people may still only be co-opted to serve external goals.
Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
Self-mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Self-mobilization can spread if government and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power.

**Table 2.3: Pretty's (1995) continuum of participation**

Reproduced (in a lightly edited form) from Cornwall's adapted version (2008) p.272  
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When community archives are considered in relation to Arnstein's (1969) and Pretty's (1995) typologies of participation, a complex picture emerges. Hopkins (2008), in his exploration of community archives, argues that in seeking to address marginalization and exclusion there has been a naive tendency (both within Government and high level policy making and in the British archival profession) to attempt to bring what is seen to be on the outside into the mainstream, and to see such entry into the mainstream as a universal aspiration. This type of engagement, an un-problematized celebration of multiculturalism and diversity, is simply a mechanism in which the appropriation of the marginalized is embedded, compounded and reinforced. Hopkins (2008) argues that in such attempts to mainstream the marginalized the tropes of a centre–periphery relationship are present, the former benefiting from the use of the latter for its own ends, the latter taking little from, indeed, being controlled by the relationship. Drawing from discourses in museology and curatorial practice, he argues that such disparity can result in community knowledge and memory becoming commodified and decontextualized, and then re-contextualized within the dominant episteme. The centre–periphery relationship is re- inscribed, but most disturbingly, it is also 'obfuscated behind the representation and promotion of liberal values such as tolerance, universalism and rationality', in order to 'help stem the tide of decline of public faith in the legitimacy of state institutions' (Hopkins, 2008, p.91).

It is possible to suggest that such mainstreaming, hidden behind liberal values, is damaging when it does nothing to alter the balances of societal power. At best it can be described as 'tokenism' on Arnstein's ladder, but at worst it is 'manipulation'. Community archives, then, address the balances of societal power by taking power *into their own hands* in representing their own history. Their autonomy and independence from archival institutions is fundamental in avoiding appropriation. It is *in* their position on the periphery that they find they have *power*. This power is both a political statement on the silences within the mainstream and the misrepresentations therein, and it is also the power to represent.

However, Pretty's (1995) typology of participation carries a salutary warning, that 'self-initiated mobilization' may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth

and power'. Research into community archives has revealed that many groups face long-term challenges relating to resources and technical expertise (Flinn, 2010), compounded by the fact that there is an ongoing disparity between the objectives of funders (that align with the mainstream) and the needs of the communities in representing their histories (Hopkins, 2008). It seems that when community archives have taken power into their own hands, the overall distribution of power and control is challenged, but remains unaltered.

Similar issues are being discussed in a development context, as elucidated by Cornwall (2008), who asserts that translating voice into influence requires more than finding spaces and processes for capturing what people want to say. It involves efforts 'from above' and 'from below' to build and support collectivities that can continue to exert pressure for change (Gaventa and Robinson, 1998). These processes take investment, time and persistence.

We can turn to another typology, developed by White and adapted by Cornwall (Table 2.4), to perhaps help elucidate this further. White's (1996) typology focuses on the interests at stake in various forms of participation, highlighting what participation can achieve as a means of breaking it down. In this typology, which is also normative in its structure, 'transformative' participation becomes the idealized outcome where 'empowerment' is located. If (as perhaps research into community archives suggests) self-mobilization is critical within a community archives context, then the challenge for implementing agencies such as archival institutions is how to enable the self-mobilization represented by the community archive to become transformative in relation to broader political issues and material inequalities.

<b>Form</b>	<b>What participation means to the implementing agency</b>	<b>What participation means for those on the receiving end</b>	<b>What participation is for</b>
Nominal	Legitimation – to show they are doing something	Inclusion – to retain some access to potential benefits	Display
Instrumental	Efficiency – to limit funders' input, draw on community contributions	Cost – of time spent on project-related labour and	As a means to achieving cost-effectiveness and local

	and make projects more cost-effective	other activities	facilities
Representative	Sustainability – to avoid creating dependency	Leverage – to influence the shape the project takes and its management	To give people a voice in determining their own development
Transformative	Empowerment – to enable people to make their own decisions, work out what to do and take action	Empowerment – to be able to decide and act for themselves	Both as a means and an end, a continuing dynamic

**Table 2.4: White’s (1996) Typology of Interests**

Reproduced from Cornwall’s adapted version (2008) p.273

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Aside from an examination of the resonance with community archive initiatives, Pretty’s (1995) and White’s (1996) typologies draw out other points of interest that can be related back to the archival landscape. In Pretty’s continuum of participatory practice, ‘functional participation’ echoes the type of ‘participatory archive’ that I have linked with (post)positivism; where participation feeds into mainly predetermined project goals to reduce costs or manage workloads. This (post)positivist vision of the ‘participatory archive’ could also fit into White’s ‘instrumental’ category, in that it draws on community contributions as a means of cost effectiveness. It is perhaps more challenging to consider how I have described constructivist participation, and where it may fit in White’s and Pretty’s typologies. On the surface constructivist approaches to the ‘participatory archive’, such as the archival commons, could be seen to resonate with Pretty’s (1995) ‘interactive’ participation:

The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures or practices (p.96).

Models such as the ‘archival commons’ also have the potential to move towards ‘self

mobilization'. It would even be possible to argue that the archival commons model is synonymous with White's 'transformative participation' in its ideal of enabling people to take their own decisions, work out what to do, and to take independent action. Accordingly then, these constructivist or 'commons' based approaches to the 'participatory archive' tick all the right boxes when compared against these typologies. This perhaps highlights what is lacking from the typologies themselves. The fundamental question of 'who is included?' is not formative in Arnstein's (1969), Pretty's (1995), or White's (1996) representations of participatory practice. For me, this raises an important possibility: that participatory purpose and methodology are perhaps separable. It is possible to develop and implement a *participatory methodology* with 'collaboration' and a 'shared authority' placed at the center, without having a *participatory purpose* (aims and objectives that address social inequalities or injustices in order to bring about change). This is perhaps the case in an archival context, with both the archival commons model and other constructivist iterations of participatory practice. The archival commons aligns well as a *participatory methodology*, but it does not seek to engage with a *participatory purpose*.

It is important to highlight here that not all typologies of participation presented in a development context dismiss the question of 'who is included?' For example, to seek to answer, or at least highlight, this complexity Farrington and Bebbington (1993) have proposed a simple axis to assess forms of participatory practice according to depth and breadth. A 'deep' participatory process engages participants in all stages of a given activity, from identification to decision-making. Such a process can remain 'narrow', however, if it only involves a handful of people, or particular interest groups. Equally, a 'wide' range of people might be involved, but if they are only informed or consulted their participation would remain 'shallow'. As such, it can be an instrument through which to explore claims to participation that turn out to have involved only elite, older, richer members of the 'community'. It can also be a means to expose iterations of participation in which certain groups, such as women and children, have been excluded (Farrington and Bebbington, 1993, p.177). Certainly, when considered in broad terms, the discourses on PAR seem to inextricably link participatory purpose and methodology, and see the latter flowing naturally from the former. However, the possibility that they are separable may prove to be a useful way of analyzing participatory approaches in an archival context.

### *Tensions within Participatory Action Research*

As a social research methodology, PAR is not unblemished from criticism. It stands on contested ground. Celebrated by some for its ability to empower and transform; PAR is increasingly recognized to revolve around a complex interplay of human relationships and structures, in which dominance, control and power are all entangled. Critiques of PAR have emerged from postmodern perspectives which essentially challenge that any method, theory, or tradition has the universal 'right' or privileged form of knowledge. These perspectives highlight that all truth claims serve particular interests (Kindon et al, 2007). Placed within a postmodern deconstructive analysis, the particular interests that PAR serves falls under scrutiny. Under such scrutiny, a strong viewpoint has emerged to suggest that participatory approaches, far from circumventing power, are in themselves formed and are played out within power structures of dominance and control, and as such, differ little from externally imposed forms of research (Kapoor, 2002). Some within a development context have gone as far as to suggest that participation is in fact nothing more than a new form of tyranny (Cooke, 2001). Advocates of PAR acknowledge the challenge made by postmodernism and no longer see participation, if they ever did, as a power-free mode of action, but as a situated and contestable work in progress.

The situated and contestable nature of PAR is in part related to its interplay with community, and the complexity inherent in diversity and differentiation. Guijt and Shah (1998) problematize the notion of 'community' as presented by PAR, arguing that simplistic understandings of community conceals power relations *within* communities, and further masks biases in points of view based on, for example, age, class, caste, ethnicity, religion and gender.

Even in participatory approaches that seek to engage with a wide/deep representation of any particular community, the public nature of participation and the group dynamics that are created, can lead to group decisions that reinforce the viewpoints and interests of the already powerful. The dynamics between the agenda of the implementing agency and the participants also comes under scrutiny when 'local knowledge' becomes confined and constructed through the community's perception of what the implementing agency can offer and deliver. The simplistic or unexplored dynamics of individual agency and social structure and the different, changing, and multiple identities of individuals, along with the subtleties that are



missed in a homogenous approach, are some of the arguments that illustrate that participatory practice, as a form of social action, is fraught. What emerges or is reinforced by an analysis of the discourse around PAR, is that the products of participation must always be viewed as representing constructed and situated viewpoints, brought about through the subtle interplay of relational power between the participants, their broader community and the implementing agency. Within the representations that will be created, there will be new silences and potential misrepresentations. Truth can never be fixed, situated constructs of community and the resulting ontologies are challengeable, and must and should be continually contested and left open to refute. The crucial element becomes about how to be transparent about how the participatory process and its end products are situated and constructed, and how to accommodate, allow for, and even encourage difference. Furthermore, participatory methodologies in the vein of PAR have been formulated on the adoption of a framework in which the micro is set up against the macro, the margins against the centre, the local against the elite, and the powerless against the powerful. However, this reproduces what is perhaps a far too simplistic notion that the sites of social power and control are to be found solely at the macro and central levels. Within the Development Studies discourse, Koothari (2001) draws on Foucault to argue that:

Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there...Power is employed and organized though a net like organization (Foucault, 1980, p.176 in Koothari, 2001, p.179).

Koothari goes on (drawing on Foucault) to assert that macro spheres of authority are not necessarily the only focal conductors of power. An exploration of the local and micro-points of power are necessary because:

Hegemonic or global forms of power rely in the first instance on those 'infinitesimal practices, composed of their own particular techniques and tactics, which exist in those institutions on the fringes or at the micro level of society (Foucault, 1980, p.321).

So power is everywhere, and all individuals are vehicles of power. Rather than focusing on its most centralized forms such as its concentration in the hands of a coercive elite or a ruling class, it must be understood in all of its manifestations at both micro and macro levels. In order to understand representation of the

marginalized, we have to acknowledge and seek to understand, and make transparent, the microphysics of power circulating among and between *all* individuals.

Power relations inevitably shape the boundaries of participatory spaces, what is possible within them, and who may enter, with which identities, discourses and interests. Using the idea of boundary from Foucault and others, as developed within the development discourse, Hayward suggests that we might understand power 'as the network of social boundaries that delimit fields of possible action'. Freedom, on the other hand, 'is the capacity to participate effectively in shaping the social limits that define what is possible (Hayward 1998, p.19). Social boundaries are of course dynamic, as opposed to static and fixed, but implicit in the notion of 'boundary', are points at which participatory action is limited.

Here I will return to the point made by Cornwall (2004), who frames participation as a spatial practice arguing that, in such a framework, any newly created space quickly comes to be filled with expectations, relationships, institutions and meanings that have been brought from elsewhere, and that impinge upon how that space comes to be experienced (p.180). Cornwall suggests that the social and power relationships that 'exist within the range of domains of association across which people move in the course of their everyday lives, intimately affect their ability to enter and exercise voice in any given participative space. Unless we do more to understand these processes of impingement, and the power relations that imbue these spaces, the best intentioned participatory endeavor will simply reproduce the status quo' (p.180).

What was emerging for me from my engagement with the PAR literature, including the criticisms leveled against it, was a deepening understanding that a reflective analysis of the flow of power throughout the participatory practice should be central to the iterative cycles of reflection inherent in the action research.

### **Engaging with the social justice agenda in archival discourse**

It is possible to trace the emergence of a rhetoric around social justice within archival discourse that ties in closely with the central tenets of PAR as outlined here which, despite the obvious overlaps, doesn't necessarily fold out from or back into archival debates around being 'participatory'. With some notable exceptions (Flinn, 2010; McKemmish et al

2011, 2012), there is something of a rupture between the emerging social justice discourse in my field and the trajectory of 'participatory' discussion, with the latter being framed and subsumed within broader discourses on 'participatory culture' in networked societies (Theimer, 2011; Eveleigh, 2015). Despite this rupture, the emerging social justice agenda within the archival field is worth opening up here.

The social justice agenda is openly ideological in calling archivists to account for their archival practice. Drawing on the existing literature on power, in which the archivist has been firmly shaken out from the Jenkinsonian vision (1922) of a passive custodian, and reformulated as an active shaper of the historical record (Schwartz and Cook, 2002), the social justice agenda invites the archivist to re-envision the archival mission as a social responsibility to work towards a fairer society. Prominent proponents for seeing social justice as central to the archival mission include Harris (2007, 2011); Jimerson (2006, 2007, 2009, 2013); Wallace (2010); Gilliland (2011); Dunbar (2006); Caswell (2012, 2013); Duff et al (2013); and Flinn (2009). Duff et al (2013), explore the archival landscape in relation to social justice and how it fits with wider cross-disciplinary discourses around the concept. The aim of their work is to build a conceptualization framework through which social justice claims in an archival context can be understood and measured. As part of this work, the authors define social justice as striving towards (p.324):

- Full human recognition (and disruption of structures of non-recognition; disrespect or marginalization; safety)
- Fair and just (re-)distribution (of power; of benefits and burdens; resources, goods and services; wealth; opportunity)
- Full and equal participation (in political processes and decision-making; education; employment; community facilities; collective over individual rights; common good)
- Acknowledgement and remedy of historical inequalities with specific measures (affirmative action; reparations; recognition).

The authors distinguish between social justice frames that are specifically action orientated (involving a change process), and frames that take an observational and explanatory perspective in examining the social, economic, or political phenomena that lead to inequalities. The authors advocate for the former, and draw on Frey (2009) to outline how social justice work can be premised on 'the embrace of an activist orientation' to enable 'the change of systems that create and sustain injustice' (p.326).

The ideology being expressed through this action-orientated conceptualization of social justice, closely parallels the ideologies that I have pulled out as the distinguishing features of PAR. This close association is understandable as PAR, as an action orientated social research methodology, is itself explicitly rooted and developed within a social justice framework. In drawing on Frey (2009) to suggest that social justice scholars should abandon the idea of neutral research, while attempting to foreground ethical concerns by being 'clear about whose interests are privileged by their scholarship', as well as being active in analyzing and understanding how dominant knowledge structures 'produce[s] and reproduce[s] injustice' (p.326) the authors, in fact, align with and echo some of the fundamental principles that emerge from an understanding of the vast (albeit sometimes contradictory) literature surrounding PAR. Due to the close overlap between the emerging discussion around social justice in archives and my own interest in using PAR as a methodology for constructing archives, I will use the recent archival discussions on social justice as a vehicle for opening up and questioning my own PAR infused research. Within this, I draw on my readings from critical systems theory to think about archives as systems in broader environmental contexts to help articulate my point of view.

In a recently published article in the *American Archivist*, Greene opens up the debate around social justice by raising concerns around archival ideologies that are built on social justice as a means and an end to archival theory and practice (2013). It is important to acknowledge that Greene does not stand in disagreement with the notion of an 'activist archivist'. The 'activist archivist', as depicted in Greene's work, is a concept that was introduced into archival discourse in the 1970s by Ham (1975). Greene makes it clear that he recognises the agency of the archivist, and he acknowledges that this agency places her/him at the centre of archival power. He advocates for archivists to use their agency - their archival power- to diversify holdings, the profile of researchers and the composition of their working ranks. However, he disassociates a link between these uses of archival agency- which he legitimates as approved professional goals- and what he labels as a broader social justice agenda. The reason for the disassociation is that Greene specifically links acts undertaken within a social justice framework to a process of politicization. In Greene's (2013) text, embracing social justice runs the risk of 'exchanging professional purpose for propaganda' (p.310) and 'such an alteration of archival goals risks weakening both our ethical standing and our power' (p.303).

To counter Greene's argument, Jimerson responds in the same edition of the *American Archivist* by making a distinction between 'Politics' [my capitals] in its broadest sense, and

'politics' more narrowly defined. Politics, broadly defined (from Greek: *politikos*, meaning "of, for, or relating to citizens") is the practice and theory of influencing other people on a civic or individual level. At this broad conceptual level, Politics relates to the structures, systems, processes and acts that enable the exercise of control over a human community (Wikipedia, 2014). Therefore when archival writers such as Harris invoke Derrida's statement 'that politics is archival; that the archive is the very possibility of politics', they are viewing archival acts as exercises of power and control over knowledge. They are also acknowledging that because of the bind between archives, knowledge, power and control, *all* archival acts are inherently Political. Therefore, all decisions and actions taken by archivists are Politicized. This makes it impossible for the embrace of a social justice agenda to alter the *degree* to which an archivist is acting Politically. Jimerson elucidates this position by stating that 'the problem is not politicizing archives. Rather, it is not recognizing that archives have always been politicized as centers of power within society' (2013, p.337).

If we accept (as Greene himself may well do) that there is a difference between 'Politics' in its broad sense which imbues *all* archival acts and 'politics' in a narrower sense, then we need to be clear about what the distinction between them is, and which side of the distinction the social justice agenda is located. Jimerson attempts to make this distinction by stating that:

By "political issues" I mean concerns such as democratic accountability, open government, diversity, access to information, and related issues. This is not the same as "politics," which to me means such things as electoral campaigns, partisan issues, and the like. I would not encourage archivists—except as individual citizens apart from their professional activities—to engage in such forms of politics (2013, p.337).

Jimerson also draws on Cook to point to the fact that calling on archivists to engage with and in the Politics of their archival acts, should not be conflated with narrow understandings of electoral party politics:

This is not politics as in left wing or right wing, liberal or conservative, Republican or Democrat, but Politics [my capital] as engagement, as committing the archives to societal interventions for justice rather than curatorial passivity under the guise (and illusion) of professional neutrality (Cook, 2007, xiii-xiv in Jimerson, 2013, p.307).

For Cook, at least as far as this quotation suggests, societal interventions for justice begin with an engagement with archival Politics. Where would it appear that Greene stands on this? An awareness and engagement with the Politics of the archive is not what Greene

appears to have issue with. In his recent article and his wider body of writing he consistently points to his own awareness of the consequences of his agency, and demonstrates a commitment to grappling with at least some of the causal outcomes of the power and control he exercises through his archival endeavours. He uses examples to illustrate how he uses his reflexive understandings of his Political situation as a tool for informing his actions. His understandings of the Political and its changing nature in relation to context imbue the ethical stances he has taken, and have guided him in making judgements on the best course of action. Where then is the foundation for his attack on archival calls for social justice which begin under this same premise, also seeking to inform judgements on the best course of action whilst being imbued with a critical awareness of context? Where exactly is the distinction between what he himself does under the guise of 'activist archivist', and what social justice proponents argue for?

His first concern with a social justice agenda relates to the tension archivists face between 'immediate' and 'broader' obligations and what we do when these conflict. In working for a particular institution or group, the archivist becomes part of a limited 'immediate' system or process with specific functions, goals, objectives, and aims. The limits of the immediate system will ultimately benefit some, and therefore potentially cause harm to others. Perhaps what neither Greene or Jimerson draw out is that these limitations of the immediate context and the creation of benefit/deficit is universally true for *all* immediate systems and processes that the archivist can work within, and are therefore not just unique to some. This tension is not unique to certain situations, it is a part of every possible archival working context. We cannot work outside of this tension. A social justice agenda begins in recognition of this. As Caswell (2010b, p.31) suggests (quoted by Greene, 2013, p.305):

As archivists, it is our duty not to be thoughtless "cogs" in a seemingly impartial machine, but rather to actively interrogate the function of record making and recordkeeping.

Elsewhere Caswell (2010a, p.25) again quoted by Greene (2013, p.305) suggests:

Archivists, like any other bureaucrats in a system, bear responsibility for, and complicity in, the overarching end goal of the system...In this way, we are not "referees" but "contestants" in the game of history. As contestants, archivists must fully own up to their roles in knowledge production, and critically engage with the ultimate aims of such knowledge.

My understanding at this point is that perhaps the social responsibility that the archivist must engage in within a social justice framework, is a responsibility to actively engage with

*a contextual reading of the immediate working situation and its relationship to the wider environment.* Sometimes the benefit/deficit divide is striking and immediately obvious. Sometimes it is more subtle and pernicious and has become so normalized that it is difficult for even those within the immediate system to detect it. Sometimes the benefit/deficit is honestly and openly acknowledged with the system. Sometimes it is unintentionally hidden or misunderstood. Sometimes it is deliberately and maliciously covered and misrepresented. Sometimes archivists are a part of systems and processes where the benefit/deficit divide is at its harshest and most stark: the difference between life and death, freedom and imprisonment. In these cases the deficits can include the worst of atrocities, including torture and rape, and the stripping away of all human rights and liberty. Sometimes the system more tacitly adds to economic, material or knowledge related inequalities and marginalizations. Sometimes the system is obviously set up in opposition to deficits that exist elsewhere to bring about perceived benefits. Sometimes it is much less obviously situated.

I believe Greene's misunderstanding is that a call for social justice means a blanket course of action by archivists to favour a pre-formulated conceptualization of broader societal responsibilities, at the expense of those arising from immediate context. I think the social justice agenda is in fact nuanced, situational and complex, and entirely dependent on the contextual reading of the system and process and its potential broader impact. Because of the 'situated' understanding within a social justice agenda, two archivists can legitimately take what appears to be oppositional and conflicting action, precisely because they are working on different parts of the whole (if we accept that a whole exists). Two archivists might also be in the same situation and come up with a different assessment of what the 'right' course of action is. This doesn't mean that the social justice agenda is *inconsistent*, it means that benefit/deficit is not a simple dichotomy; it is in itself multi-dimensional. My personal understanding of what it means to follow a 'call for social justice', emerging from my readings, is that it is essentially a commitment to engage with benefit/deficit and its consequences. It is basing your action on the outcomes of the sense making process that occurs when you read immediate context against wider context, within a conflict framework. It is understanding archives as 'rivalrous', and using these understandings as the point of reference for action. I do not think a benefit/deficit reading of social justice has been explicitly articulated before, or at least I haven't come across it if it has, but it is somewhat implicit when writers such as Caswell (2013) identify the social justice agenda with all that has been written within the archival literature on power (p.607). It is also implicit within Dunbar's (2006) conceptualization of archival social justice that is drawn out

from a synthesis of perspectives inherent within critical race theory, which I will turn to in due course.

Seeing the archive from a conflict perspective should not be conflated with a notion that the social justice agenda is fundamentally utilitarian, with a pre-formulated view of the 'greatest good'. Perhaps this is where the fundamental confusion arises in Greene's article. The examples that Greene gives in his article *against* social justice are nothing more than examples of the tensions and difficulties that arise when seeking to understand our working contexts, and the benefits/deficits that arise from us being a complicit part in them. A social justice agenda encourages us to work out a best course of action based on our, often new found, understandings of benefit/deficit in context; but my reading is that it does not then prescribe in any simplistic sense what that course of action should be. For social justice proponents, the most fundamental questions we as archivists can ask is: who is benefitting and who can loose out because of my/our actions? How does the benefit/deficit that I/we create fit when I take a societal perspective (the bigger picture)? And therefore what should I/we do? As such, there isn't an archival working situation that precludes the possibility of using this as the basis for informed decision-making. It applies to an archivist working within a grass-roots community archiving project, with a clear political agenda. It applies to an archivist working in a so-called mainstream collecting institution. It can also apply to an archivist working for a private company archive. Sometimes using this framework may lead an archivist as an individual to conclude that they can no longer consciously conform to the deficits created within the system, or processes, that they are a part of. Then as an individual they need to make decisions over whether they feel they can change the immediate system's status quo from within (either by transparent means, or by sabotage, and the ethics of these potential courses of action). They must decide whether they need to bring the deficit to public attention (whistleblowing), or simply leave and find something they are more suited to. In coming to these conclusions they must grapple with the extent to which they are willing to compromise their own personal understanding of the damage done by some 'deficits', in order to remain part of a system which they perceive on-balance as beneficial. Of course, the very reading of the fit between the immediate system that the archivist is part of, and the archivist's perception of a broader societal context, is in itself full of ambiguity. If we recognize that we are complicit in creating a 'deficit', can we simply rely on others in the bigger picture, in other systems, to balance those actions? Where do we draw the boundaries around what we read as context? This is the messiness and complexity of life itself and perhaps it can never be wholly resolved.



Should the social justice agenda be perceived as any more or less than a commitment to recognising benefit/deficit and acting on it, while taking a critical and reflexive stance on our actions? Tied up in much of the writings of proponents of social justice *is* this notion of 'good'; and the very word 'justice' implies a judgement or a distinction from 'injustice'. I believe this is perhaps the bigger more important question that Greene has missed the opportunity to pose. What is this 'good' that we are signing up to? What exactly is 'just' in our messy and imperfect world? When Duff et al (2013, p.326) define social justice in terms of: *full* human recognition, *fair* and *just* (re) distribution, and *full* and *equal* participation [my italics]; how is this resolvable within a benefit/deficit framework that acknowledges that a benefit here will leave a deficit there? 'Full' and 'equal' can surely only be achieved in a liberal framework that refuses to acknowledge conflict and difference? If we work towards 'full' and 'equal', knowing they can never be fully achieved, what does that mean and how we do measure what is better? Certainly 'change' is a key concept within social justice discourse. It is fundamentally action orientated. It is about making things 'more right' than they were before. Is this what Greene is really grappling with when he questions what he calls the 'troubling notion' that archivists have 'a moral imperative to "work against" existing relations of power' (2013, p.307)?

Dunbar's (2006) conceptualization of an archival social justice framework avoids the use of absolutes. This is precisely because Dunbar's epistemological understandings are drawn from critical race theory, and this is in itself structured around and in an acknowledgement of deficit and its consequences. Dunbar draws on the work of Bell (1997) to explain social justice in relation to definable goals:

- To provide a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is *more equitable* [my italics];
- To seek vehicles for actors to express their own agency, reality or representation;
- To develop strategies that broker dialog between communities with unparallel cultural viewpoints;
- To create frameworks to clearly identify, define, and analyze oppression and how it operates at various individual, cultural, and institutional levels.

It is in Dunbar's goal orientated expression of social justice that I find the closest fit between what is emerging as the basis of my understanding of social justice, and my wider questions of how this understanding can drive affirmative action in an archival context. My own view is that all archivists, regardless of situation, *do* have an ethical imperative to critically question their actions in relation to the systems that they are immediately part of

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
and the broader societal context that is impacted through what they do. At this time, I define working within a social justice framework as a commitment to critically examining benefit/deficit in relation to context as a basis for archival acts. My questions are therefore relating to the ambiguities that this creates in weighing up notions of 'more' or 'less' good, and the difficulty of setting boundaries around what counts as system and environment. I am concerned with the complexities that surround interpreting where we as individuals, and the systems we are a part of, sit within the bigger picture. I am concerned with the practical implications of seeing social justice as an end goal for the archival endeavour, because social justice is necessarily 'always in the process of becoming' (Harris, 2011, p.124). These were the questions I felt I needed to grapple with in the course of this PhD, using my engagement in a 'participatory approach' as a means of confronting and negotiating the complexities, contestations and ambiguities inherent in being 'participatory' within a framework for social justice.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### Clarifying the research design

In this chapter I will clarify how in the early stages of the research process, the different elements of research and practice were beginning to come together. In the previous two chapters, I introduced my identification of action research as the overarching framework in which my research is embedded. I also introduced my alignment with a participatory worldview. In particular, I introduced the writings of Reason & Bradbury (2001), outlining the aspects of their articulation that resonated with me as well as the elements I was less comfortable with. In relation to Reason and Bradbury’s approach, I indicated that I was resisting a total immersion into their worldview, despite recognizing its influence in acting as a starting point for me. I also introduced PAR as a useful means of framing the participatory intervention I was seeking to go on to develop. Table 3.1 illustrates how all of this was enabling me to formulate a basic research design.

Design Element	Description	Choice
Worldview	Ontology, epistemology and implicit assumptions driving research	Participatory
Research Methodology	Broad framework for knowledge generation, evaluation and analysis	Action Research
Practice	Practical frameworks and boundaries - choosing who, what, where, when and why	A ‘participatory’ intervention undertaken with a defined group of participants
Data Collection Method(s)	Specific methods used to collect data about the practice to be fed into the research	Journaling Interviews Recording key activities/events

**Table 3.1: Basic research design**

## Distinguishing between research and practice

Having looked into PAR, I felt it would be a relevant and useful framework to use as the starting point for developing a practical intervention with a group of participants, so I saw it as the methodology that would inform the practical elements of my research. The relationship between the practical participatory intervention I was intending to go on to develop, and my research *on* that practical intervention as represented in this thesis was and is complex. I was not intending to turn my PhD research into a participatory endeavor in which I would co-construct this thesis with the group of participants with whom I had participated with in the practical context. I felt it would be too difficult to legitimate that approach given the normative expectations surrounding PhD research. Yet I recognized that the participatory practice and my research on that praxis are inherently interlinked in the sense that my research is derived out of 'knowledge-in-action' and is therefore knowledge arising from the 'praxis'. This needs to be acknowledged as one of the tensions running through the research endeavor. PhD research is normatively construed as a solitary effort, which forces a distinction between *my* research as represented in this thesis, and the participatory practice under taken with *others* on which this thesis is based. The participants I went on to work with have reflected with me on the participatory process and are embedded to a degree as co-producers of the knowledge represented in this thesis, yet it is written from my vantage point, and takes in the trajectory of the research and practice from my perspective. The knowledge has been created in relation with them, yet they remain distanced in my claim to use it to fulfill the requirements of this PhD. Here I circle around the irresolvable tensions and contradictions inherent in attempting to do participatory research from within an academic frame, elements of which are discussed in more depth in Chapter 7.

## Research methods

Across Chapters 1 and 2, I have outlined how my worldview in instigating this research is broadly participatory, and how action research with its focus on the emergence of knowledge in the midst of action is my overarching methodological framework, and how PAR has emerged as a useful means of framing the practical intervention. My PhD writing is therefore seeking to provide a rich reflection on the participatory action research intervention, as a *process*. As this took shape, and as I began to move forward with

developing the practical participatory intervention (outlined in Chapter 4), it became apparent that I needed to think about how I would record the unfolding process. From April 2012, I began to keep a detailed research journal to record my observations as a participant observer in the process, and this became my main data collection method. To gain a more rounded perspective and gather in views from both my host institution and the participants I worked alongside, this data was supplemented by a set of interviews undertaken with the Special Collections team at the Wellcome Library, and a set of interviews undertaken with the contributors (See appendices A & B). I draw in an analysis of these sets of interviews at various points in this thesis. I also audio recorded key events (see appendix B), and I draw on some of that material in Chapter 7.

My research journal records my immediate reflections of meetings and interactions as the process has unfolded, but it also draws in thoughts from my ongoing reading, and acts as a space in which I have critically reflected broadly and iteratively on the process and my research. It became a deeply personal space in which my emotions, and aspects of my private world, were entangled in trying to make sense of the praxis I was involved in. The decision around the extent to which I would draw on that private, personal, emotional space and bring it out into the light as part of the knowledge generation process represented here in this thesis, was a decision that evolved *with* the research process. My *unfolding* commitment to centering my biography as the starting point for knowledge generation is explored in more depth in Chapter 6.

## Research ethics

Once my focus on mental health was established, and the idea of working with a group of participants with lived experience of mental health to build an archive became more concrete (see Chapter 4), I made a formal application to UCL's Research Ethics Committee, and received ethical approval in July 2012 (UCL Research Committee, Project ID: 4003/001). The ethical framework introduced to the contributors, through which they gave their initial informed consent to be involved in the creation of the archive (and this research) is provided in Appendix E. Ethics is the process of 'systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior' (IEP, n.d.), and therefore, the participatory rhetoric on which my practice and research has been based, is inextricably bound into the notion of ethics. The vision of the participatory that I have taken forward into my research, is deeply connected to recommending 'right' and 'wrong' means of collaborating, and my discussion in this thesis evolves into a challenge and critique in

relation to these assumptions. By concentrating on the process, I have been deeply engaged with the ethical issues that the process raises. As will become clear as the narrative progresses, this thesis is inextricably linked to the ethics of archival representation, the ethics of being participatory and negotiating control, and the ethics of seeking to adopt an activist stance in the situated context that I have been operating in.

### **Grappling with worldviews, grand narratives and theory**

Grappling with how to respond to post- turns (post-structuralism, post-modernism, post-theory, post-foundationalism) has had implications for how I use and weave theory into my written narrative of the process, and it is to that question that I now turn. In Chapter 2, I articulate how I had begun to discover that the adoption and expression of an *all encompassing worldview* at the outset of research was problematic for me and I describe how, in response to the literature I encountered, I was inclined to see ontological and epistemological considerations as fluid and therefore resistant to full or final articulation. Is reality more than a dance of signs? I may never be able to reach a final conclusive answer and settle on one ontological/ epistemological stance. This fluidity around ontological and epistemological position, in fact, resonates with how knowledge is built within an action research framework where knowledge is emergent rather than fixed at the start. An action research methodology assumes that the process of research *creates or reveals* the worldview rather than being framed by it in the first instance. This meant that I was beginning to understand that attempting to tie the research down within a complete worldview at the outset would not only be unnecessarily restrictive, but would also be quite impossible in conjunction with a methodology that has an emergent and change orientated approach.

So if it was not going to be possible to articulate a *complete* worldview at the outset to underpin and frame the research, I began seeking to define what I was left with. I had drawn out important distinctions between constructivist and participative approaches with the latter seeking a direct engagement with the political within a transformative perspective. I had acknowledged that I wanted to position my research and myself in line with participatory approaches that are explicitly seeking to be transformative. Clearly, as I had begun to draw out, such an alignment was leading me to articulate certain fundamental assumptions at the outset, for example, that archives are rivalrous in nature. These assumptions were informing and infusing the whole of the research process even when given the proviso that these

fundamental assumptions should be open to challenge and change. So although the articulation of a complete worldview was not possible for me, I was acknowledging a commitment to both a purpose and an approach.

### Pluralism and its implications

A deepening of my belief that the articulation of a single worldview is not the primary basis on which I wanted to make distinctions about participation or frame my own research, came from my ongoing engagement with the literature on action research and my exposure to a branch known as critical systems theory. I found, within this branch, that others had identified and were engaged with some of the key concerns that had begun to emerge from my thinking and reading on participation. In particular, I found resonance in the thinking and writing of Midgley (2000) who locates himself as part of the critical systems school.

Critical systems theory has evolved from systems theory and it is now pertinent for me to try to introduce or explain systems theory in a little more depth. To do so relatively succinctly is difficult, but it is possible to draw together some fundamental ideas that are shared across the evolving and emerging schools of systems thinkers to give an impression of its core. Firstly, systems theory asserts that complex systems involve interconnected parts. Secondly, the organization of complex systems can be understood in terms of a series of levels, where elements of one level may be dependent on superior and inferior levels. Thirdly, the properties of systems are emergent. That is to say that they cannot be predicted from the properties of individual elements in themselves. Lastly, systems are characterized by feedback, recursion, boundaries, nested subsystems and responsiveness to the environment in which the system is located.

Critical systems thinkers often refer to three waves of systems thinking that have occurred over the last half century. Early systems theorists such as Bertalanffy (1956; 1968) were responsible for the development of general systems theory which described systems in physical terms, resorting to metaphors from electronic computation or biology. This 'hard systems' tradition still has its advocates and practitioners (see for example the *Journal of the Operational Research Society*) and finds application in areas such as production engineering. According to writers such as Stephens (2012), who approach critical systems theory from an eco-feminist perspective, early systems thinking was a product of the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries' 'Age of Machines' (p.3), but it took a step forward in highlighting circular forms of causality which moved conventional science beyond the linear causal modes of traditional mechanistic thought. It led to discoveries in complex systems such as chaotic dynamics and cybernetic principles, and led to applications across biological, technological and social systems albeit in ways that were still in themselves mechanistic and conservative (Burton, 2003, p.6).

The limits of the physical metaphor (and for thinkers such as Midgley, the non-systemic traces of reductionism and mechanism) were reached, and the second wave of systems thinking developed. This 'soft systems thinking' employed social metaphors to develop appropriate systems approaches for human systems. This involved an embrace of a more phenomenological, interpretative understanding of human systems where meaning is central and is negotiated inter-subjectively. These 'soft systems' thinkers were branching into ethics and attempting to contest the conventional, narrow applications of science, promoting the need to build shared understandings and participatory decision-making (Burton, 2003, pp.329-331).

The third wave, or critical systems school, in which Midgley locates himself, has drawn on the critical theory of Habermas particularly in relation to theories of knowledge and of communicative rationality, and on Foucault's theories on the nature of power. It has three central concerns that are complimentary to what I see as the purposes behind research and practice labeled as 'participatory'. These are to: (1) undertake deliberate action towards social improvement (2) engender emancipation or liberation from oppression, with a commitment to achieving mutual understandings, and (3) address issues of power and coercion in research practice (Burton, 2003, pp.329-221). My engagement with the ideas within critical systems theory came when I read about the methodology of systemic intervention being conducted by critical systems theorists who were drawing on participatory methods.

Systemic intervention assumes that everything in the universe is directly or indirectly connected with everything else. However, a 'God's eye' view of that interconnectedness is not possible, so the inevitable limits to understanding also have to be understood. These limits are boundaries. Therefore, systemic intervention is fundamentally concerned with how to explore those boundaries, and how to take account of the inevitable lack of comprehensiveness. In fact, the centrality of the concept of boundary within systemic intervention is such that systemic intervention has been *defined* as a 'purposeful action to create change in relation to reflection on



The notion of boundaries had already surfaced in my reading at various points. I found it in instances of the PAR literature which drew on Foucault's theories of power 'as a network of social boundaries that delimit the fields of possible action' (Koothari,2001, p.140). I picked up again on the concept of boundary in my reading of Reason and Bradbury's (2001) version of action research under the lens of a participatory worldview and how it is the boundaries around the participation that define its evaluation and validity. For me, it seemed that a consideration of the boundaries around being participatory would hold the key to being able to adequately measure the research against its benchmarks. To find then, that others had articulated this position more clearly and distinctly than I had been able to do represented a turning point in my understanding.

Central to the systemic intervention methodology is the process used to make boundary decisions. This is a reflection upon boundary judgments and a critique of the ethical consequences of different possible actions. As an absolute inclusion of all the intertwined interests in a design situation is impossible, the need to draw and critique boundaries up-front in all interventions is essential (Stephens, 2012, p.4). This includes the boundary around the system in focus, demarcating the system from its environment, and those elements and influences that are going to be considered and those that are not. It is also taking up the concerns of those who are involved, or who benefit and those who are affected but who might not benefit or who are likely to suffer (Stephens, 2012, p.4). Midgley has referred to the exploration and considerations of this boundary critique as 'process philosophy' (2011, p.4).

Systemic intervention asserts that boundary decisions are crucial not just to the evaluative process, but also in the development and use of knowledge and theory. At this point, a consideration of Midgley's 'process philosophy' began to stretch my understanding to consider a new horizon of possibility. According to Midgley, *knowledge* that is contained within boundaries can be examined, and propositions about its nature can be made. A focus on the theory of the content within boundaries privileges particular perspectives. However, a focus on the *process* of making boundary judgments relies on the placement of a boundary around knowledge or data sets. The ontological primacy of analysis is shifted *away* from the content or epistemological theory of knowledge production (Midgley, 2011, p.3), and *towards* the process in which knowledge is generated. Accordingly, no one theory needs to

be regarded as more 'foundational' than others in describing the knowledge that is generated. All boundary judgments are made in a local context, so even epistemological theories can be viewed as contextually useful or not (Midgley, 2011, p.5).

Applying a process perspective to reflection and dialogue by researchers and agents questions the degree of certainty that can be ascribed to the boundaries implicit in any theory. Questioning the boundaries undermines dogmatism and blind confidence that there is only one 'correct' boundary to work with (Midgley, 2000, p.22).

Seemingly alternative, or even incommensurate paradigms, can coexist within a process philosophy framework. This is because process philosophy enables participants or agents to bring all manner of ontological accounts into research and interventions. The generation of new knowledge can be made explicit, to provide a powerful and empowering learning opportunity for research participants. A process philosophy lens challenges the notion that knowledge is an entity or property of the powerful elite or institutions, or that endowed power structures can claim centrality, legitimacy and authority (Murphy, 1991, p.232). As process philosophy reveals, researchers face a choice of standpoint: to work with a theory and defend it, or work with or construct multiple theories each of which privilege particular insights (Midgley, 2000, p.38). Theories that will be seen as useful for what purposes will depend on the researcher's relationship with the wider systems in which the research is embedded. Therefore, locally relevant standards for choice (as opposed to universal standards) can be defined, and their construction critiqued through reflections on the nature of the knowledge generated (Midgley, 2011). Theoretical pluralism's value lies in enabling a variety of purposes and values simultaneously to explain phenomena in context. Therefore, pluralism offers greater insights than working from one position alone. It follows that interpretation of a single phenomenon results in multiple potential understandings. This emphasis on *process* in knowledge generation and use, and the possibility of multiplicity, resonates with the position I felt I was beginning to articulate. Adopting a pluralist approach makes the conceptualization of a single worldview as the basis for undertaking (and perhaps understanding) research redundant. If this is the case then it allows the researcher to acknowledge that the participatory worldview is one potentially useful framework upon which to process the research but one with its own boundary constraints. It means that other epistemological starting points, worldviews and theories might also be employed in tandem where they are found to be useful in filling the gaps or

introducing a new perspective. Whilst from a traditional standpoint, the use of conflicting epistemologies would be seen as theoretically implausible, Midgley's process philosophy with its focus on theoretical pluralism makes this leap possible. For me, adopting Midgley's argument allows me to make the leap that I have been looking for, in leaving behind a set worldview in favour of a potentially pluralistic approach.

In one sense, there was a relief in being able to draw myself away from the aspects of Reason and Bradbury's participatory worldview that made me feel uncomfortable. However, in doing so I had to accept that some questions would remain continually open: Is there a more than human embeddedness to my existence, or is it a dance of signs? I have found that perhaps I have a natural desire for universality, to have something concrete to defend.

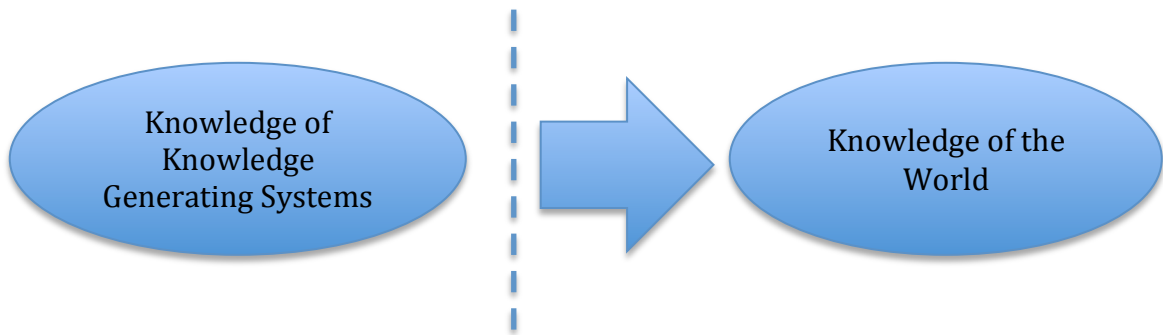
Midgley (2011) suggests that 'a theory of the world or human knowledge that is given universal status is called a "foundational theory" because it becomes a foundation stone upon which to build a theoretical or methodological edifice' (p.2). Midgley acknowledges the potential of an emerging paradox inherent in aligning research to theoretical pluralism. According to Midgley, this paradox becomes apparent when researchers seek to explain *why* it is legitimate to draw upon multiple theoretical lenses. In seeking legitimization, writers have often fallen into the trap of finding a single epistemological theory of knowledge generation to explain why it is acceptable to take a pluralistic standpoint, and in doing so afford the one explanatory theory foundational status. Midgley uses Maturana and Varela's (1998) theory of autopoiesis as an illustrative example. According to Midgley (2011), the theory of autopoiesis offers a biological explanation of the self-producing nature of human beings and their ability to co-ordinate their actions using language. In seeking to co-ordinate their actions, people collaboratively develop 'rational domains'. These 'rational domains' are uses of language and connections between concepts that are particular to the local contexts in which the action takes place. Individuals engage in multiple contexts of action, and therefore move between rational domains, some of which may use language in quite different ways. Two separate rational domains may involve quite different explanations of what might appear (from the perspective of another domain) to be the same phenomenon. Therefore, what is seen from one perspective as a contradiction in values, beliefs or behaviors might not appear contradictory at all to the person moving between contexts. The theory of autopoiesis

also explains how people actually shift between rational domains. This requires an engagement of emotion, allowing a switch of attention to a new context, which invokes the relevant rational domain. Thus, the theory of autopoiesis explains how emotional commitment to action and locally relevant rationality are entwined. The relevance for theoretical pluralism in systemic action research is that commitments to action may drive the choice of different theories, depending on how they fit with the rational domains that are invoked in the local context. Thus, the theory of autopoiesis can, and *has* been, used by systemic writers to provide a justification of theoretical pluralism in the face of questions that might be asked about whether contradictions between different theories can legitimately be tolerated (Midgley, 2011, p.3-4).

Midgley (2011) argues that there are risks in using foundational epistemologies as a justification for pluralism because it establishes a set of 'truths' about the nature of knowing which then determines the relevance or value of other theories, which to be acceptable must be compatible with the epistemological assumptions already made. Thus, the risk is a divergence from theoretical pluralism to a limited position, which eliminates the use of any theory that might 'contradict the "more basic" epistemological foundations that have come to be taken for granted' (p.4).

According to Midgley (2011), it is our traditional approaches to epistemology that catch us in a spiral of infinite regress, and lead us always back to the establishment of a foundational theory. His model of traditional approaches to epistemology is reproduced below in Figure 3.1. From a systems perspective, foundational epistemologies seek to identify the general nature of knowledge generating systems. Knowledge about knowledge generating systems is fundamental because other forms of knowledge are merely outcomes of the generating system:

If they were not regarded in this way (i.e., if the epistemological theory was not granted a foundational status) then a problem of infinite regress would arise: regarding the epistemological theory as just a limited perspective would require one to ask what gives rise to this perspective, and the answer would again be a perspective needing explanation, ad infinitum. Making the theory of knowledge generating systems distinct from all other types of theory about the world (i.e., making it universal) solves this problem (p.4).



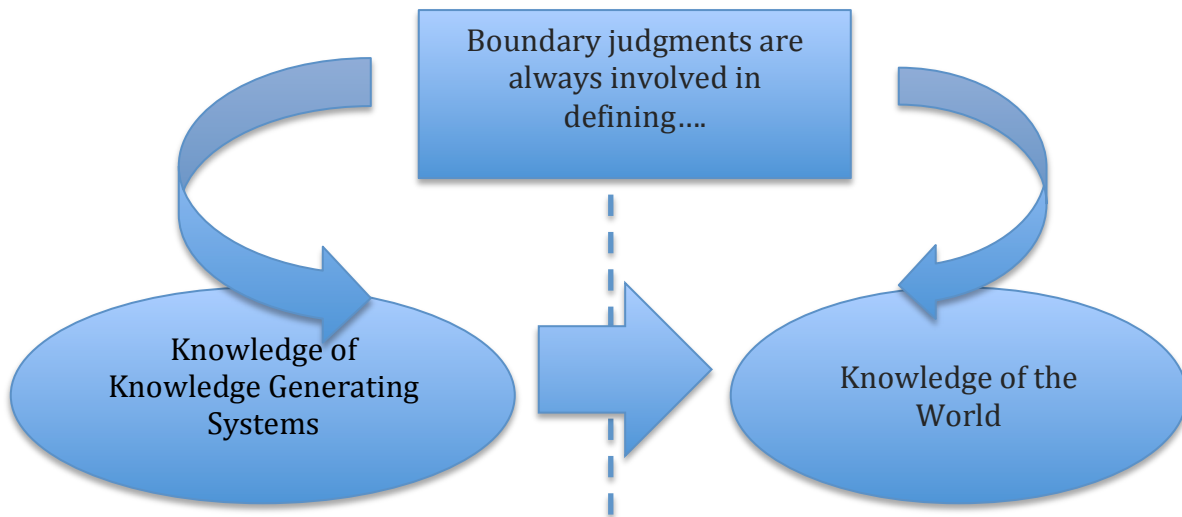
**Figure 3.1: Midgley's (2011) Traditional Approach to Epistemology**

Reproduced from Midgley (2011) p.5

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Midgley argues that we can escape from this spiral and avoid establishing a foundational theory through paying critical attention to 'boundary'. Midgley (2011) returns to the fundamental principles of systemic intervention, which asserts that everything in the world is directly or indirectly connected to everything else. He argues that we cannot have a God's eye view of this inter-connectedness so our understandings are inevitably limited and these limits are boundaries. All knowledge is dependent on boundary judgments, whether these are implicit or explicit (p.6). According to Midgley, this recognition enables the knowledge generating systems and the world itself to be defined in exactly the same manner: through the process of making boundary judgments. This makes it possible to accept any number of theories about either knowledge generating systems or the wider world. This systemic approach to epistemology is illustrated in Figure 3.2 below. Each theory will assume a different boundary judgment, and by exploring different possible boundaries for analysis the door is opened to different theoretical understandings. Accordingly, Midgley's (2011) argument establishes the following principles (p.6):

1. All knowing is inevitably bounded
2. We can generate greater insight by exploring the boundaries of knowledge than we can by taking boundaries for granted
3. Different theories assume different boundaries
4. So exploring multiple boundaries can usefully involve drawing upon multiple theories.



**Figure 8: Midgley's (2011) Systemic Approach to Epistemology**

Reproduced from Midgley (2011) p.6

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According to Midgley (2011), 'the only 'foundation stone' left in the systems approach is the widely accepted proposition that all theories assume implicit or explicit boundaries, and that a process of bounding (whether implicit or explicit) is involved in knowledge production. Thus, the 'foundation' is merely a recognition of the inevitability of limitations to knowledge, and all 'content theories' about what gives rise to this process and how it unfolds (i.e., epistemological theories of knowledge production) are made available to the researcher for use in local contexts' (p.6).

At this point, I was led to reflect on the extent of the shift in my own thinking opened by theoretical pluralism. In my identification with a participatory stance and my commitment to action research I had already accepted that there is always a multiplicity of ways of knowing. I was also comfortable with the notion that an extension of epistemology will occur through the research process because understanding emerges in its context. I was also comfortable with the suggestion that different conceptual-propositional frameworks will be evoked and/or discovered in the sensemaking process, and that all this is fundamental to a knowledge-in-action framework that necessarily takes an emergent developmental form. The shift in perspective, opened up to me by my engagement with Midgley's writing, was in one sense infinitesimal, but in another it enabled me to take a profound step beyond what is suggested within the participatory worldview alone. It comes back to the limitation that occurs when we turn a stance into a foundational theory because all conceptual or propositional frameworks evoked thereafter qualify due to their alignment with the

foundation. There is no room for *contradiction with* the worldview, and many potential avenues of action, exploration or explanation are therefore automatically closed.

It is perhaps useful now for me to summarize my emerging understanding on my research design. I began with introducing Lewin's change model as the baseline for my action research methodology because of the utility of the plan/act/reflect cycle that it introduces. I explored the tenets of the participatory worldview and the dimensions of action research as outlined by Reason and Bradbury (2011), but I acknowledged that I found the spiritual aspects difficult to encompass as elements of the research. I also felt unable to resolve the questions I had as to whether there is a universality, or more than human embeddedness, that can ground all knowledge. I found tensions over the contextual and situated nature of concepts such as human flourishing and even democracy and begun to apply the concept of boundary (which I first discovered through an exploration of the meaning of 'participation') to my understanding of how research using these benchmarks might be evaluated through the examination of the limitations and constraints that boundary implies. I found, through the concept of boundary, an empathy with the ideas expressed within critical systems theory, in particular Midgley's (2011) focus on process philosophy and boundary critique. I became intrigued by the direction this focus on boundary led to when considered in relation to the construction or use of theory and knowledge as a foundation and outcome of research. Boundary critique has led me to an alignment with theoretical pluralism with its assertion that using a worldview or a theory as the foundation for research is unnecessarily limiting. Conceptually, I can see how Midgley's focus on boundary has opened the door to theoretical pluralism and how it can be plausible within a research context. I acknowledge that the outcomes of my research will be contestable and situated, and that I can draw on the participatory worldview. But that I may also, as the research unfolds, draw on any number of other epistemologies and theories as demanded by the local context. Thus creating the potential for a plurality of contradictory understandings.

Therefore, the infinitesimal but profound shift in understanding that has occurred in my acceptance of theoretical pluralism is that the 'participatory worldview' is not the foundation of my research design but one of the starting points that has fed into my understandings, alongside my commitment to Lewin's planning, action and reflection cycles and Midgley's (2011) process philosophy and boundary critique. The tensions or difficulties I have experienced in fully embracing the participatory

worldview are part of the limits and constraints of the view itself, and therefore I do not need to resolve them. These starting points have fed into my conceptualization of my research design, and represent my initial drawing of a set of boundaries. I accept that these boundaries will shift and new boundaries may be introduced, and that this is the emergent pluralistic nature of my research. I accept that the research may point not just to a multiplicity of ways of knowing, but that contradiction in these ways of knowing is acceptable and plausible.



## Chapter 4: Initial Drawing of the Boundaries

This chapter will focus on explaining the iterative process of exploration, reflection and assimilation that initially led to the establishment of ‘an area of application’ (practical context) for this PhD.

### Acknowledging the tensions in establishing the practical context

It is important to acknowledge from the outset the presence of an uneasy tension within my research design. Chapter 1 establishes that:

This research is concerned with the specific *application* of participatory methods within a local context. Its central aim is the provision of a rich picture on participatory approaches within an archival context, by taking an inductive and *practical* approach (p.14).

In other words, I was looking to develop an area of application or practical context in which to apply participatory methods, in order to feed my PhD research with a participatory process in a local context. However, this sits in direct tension with what it means to take a *participatory* approach when adopting the rhetoric around PAR. In Chapter 2, I articulate that taking a participatory approach from this perspective:

Is distinguishable because its start and end points are to address, challenge and revise - ‘to make things better than they were before’. The difference can be summed up as follows: constructivist research and practice seeks deep and rich understandings of ourselves, our society and our world; participatory research and practice seeks transformation of ourselves, our society and our world (p.47).

The tension, then, is around the start and end points of the *participatory* approach. To be truly *participatory*, the start and end points should be to ‘address, challenge and revise’ a distinct social problem. However, in my research design there is a meta-layer (of research) above the *participatory* approach. This means that even if the start and end points of the practice conform to my own definition of a *participatory* approach, the broader start and end points are my academic research and the fulfillment of requirements for my PhD. With this academic construct sitting around the *participatory* approach (with the broader start and end points that this inevitably brings) can the approach be truly *participatory*? I have no answer to this,

but simply acknowledge my unease at the tension that this creates. In fact, my unease at seeking to ‘falsely’ construct a practical context in which to encourage a participatory archival process to occur has remained with me throughout the whole of the processes underpinning this PhD.

### Refining the institutional context

The first boundary build around the development of my participatory approach comes from the fact that the Wellcome Library is acting as the institutional partner for my Collaborative Doctoral Award. Although I could have explored options to work in other contexts to supplement or compare with whatever I constructed at the Wellcome Library, I decided fairly early on that I would keep the institutional boundary and work within it. Even within the context of the Wellcome Library there is a further narrowing of the boundaries, as my intention to explore participatory approaches in an archival context has drawn me to embed the practical aspects specifically in the context of the Wellcome Library’s Special Collections.

Having articulated these institutional boundaries, I sought to explore the Special Collections team’s existing approach to archival processes, to ascertain how and where I could embed my research into participatory approaches. Over the initial six to eight months, I positioned myself as a participant observer within the team. I drew on strategy and policy documents, talked with staff and observed some interactions between staff and their publics (but at a distance). In this time I built up a perception of how the team operated in relation to participatory approaches, and my perceptions were the starting point for my further decision-making.

The Special Collections team are themselves immersed in the wider institutional contexts in which they are placed. In hierarchical terms, the team is informed and influenced by the culture set by the Wellcome Library, which is part of the wider Wellcome Collection, which itself sits within the Wellcome Trust. It became apparent that the Trust’s institutional culture, with its lean towards innovation and encouragement of intellectual debate as well as its engagement in pushing the boundaries, is reflected in the Special Collections team’s openness to exploratory research and change. There was, in personal conversations with staff, a willingness to reflect on issues generated by current archival practice within the team, coupled

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
with a desire to do things effectively and efficiently, and to make improvements and changes when deemed desirable.

However, it became clear that the team's priorities for exploration, innovation and change are necessarily bounded by the Wellcome Library's Transformation Strategy, 2009-2014 (WL1<sup>7</sup>), which champions three major work streams in its five-year plan:

- Targeted collecting
- Strategic mass digitization
- Expert interpretation

### *Targeted collecting*

Targeted collecting represents a perceptible shift in approach for the Special Collections team. Instead of seeking to enrich, strengthen and compliment the collections already held, the 'targeted' strategy looks beyond an incremental focus to collect in new areas. This is being undertaken in order to more fully reflect post World War Two activity in medicine and science and its associated impact on society (WL1, p.4). There is potential within this stream to argue the case for a participatory approach to targeting collections. Perhaps by establishing mechanisms for diverse stakeholder input into strategic collecting decisions, or even more radically establishing a participatory approach to the deliberate and conscious *generation* of new archive collections. However, in reality, participatory approaches have not been established as a mechanism for driving this stream forward. Instead, the Special Collections team has moved forward with targeted collecting by keeping it as a professional activity carried out by the archivists themselves, who now take a more proactive rather than reactive approach to collection development. Using the global health themes identified in the library strategy as a guide, the archivists have actively sought to map the archival landscape in relation to these health themes, identifying collection gaps and weaknesses, establishing relationships with new potential depositors of traditional archives, and bringing these new collections into the library accordingly.

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<sup>7</sup> The full Library strategy is not publically available via the Trust's website or via Wellcome library holdings, although a summary of it is available at: <http://wellcomelibrary.org/what-we-do/library-strategy-and-policy/transforming-the-wellcome-library/>. The version I worked from was an internal document produced for staff briefing sessions, 29-30 January 2009. The reference for this unpublished report is given in Appendix B.

### *Strategic mass digitization*

The library strategy clearly indicates that strategic mass digitization is seen as the 'pivotal component to transforming the library' (WL1, p.6). The plan indicates that a five-year programme of intensive digitization would release approximately 30 million digital objects (approximately 50% of the total library analogue holdings) creating a vast resource of archival, textual, visual and aural resources. Although external contractors are involved in the digitization, and the development of the digital library is not managed directly by Special Collections team members, clearly a significant amount of Special Collections staff time is being taken up with contributing to the development of the digital library, which necessarily constrains possibilities for innovation in other areas.

### *Expert interpretation*

Like targeted collecting, the championing of expert interpretation also affords the possibility of a perceptible shift in working practice in its call for a move away from 'description' of content within collections towards interpretation and deeper contextualization of material. Within the library strategy, the suggested way of taking this forward includes engaging part-time expert advisors to compliment library staff expertise, as well as launching a library-specific fellows programme to facilitate new primary research on undiscovered parts of the collection. There is a hint within the library strategy that the digital library will be developed to incorporate a constructivist type approach to participation. This is inherent in the suggestion that 'online researcher interaction will be enabled through wiki-type development of the Library catalogue'. However, in reality this has not been taken forward as a design priority. As is the case with targeted collecting, there is strong potential within this theme to see diverse stakeholder participation around interpretation and context as a potential way of establishing a culture of expert interpretation in and around the collections. However, for the Special Collections team, this participatory potential has yet to be fully explored or taken forward (WL1, p.8).

### *Choosing a stream*

It was apparent to me that the library strategy (which the Special Collections team are in part responsible for delivering) offers plenty of potential to incorporate diverse

stakeholder participation as a means of carrying the transformation forward.

However, this potential is only hinted at and is not clearly articulated as an intention, meaning that currently the transformation is being driven forward through other means. This brings with it both challenge and opportunity for positioning my own research. On the challenging side, I have found it impossible to build my research on participatory approaches around anything already existing or definitely likely to develop from the Special Collections team in the near future. This means I have had to actively cultivate a context for exploring participatory archives, and then work to generate 'buy in' from the Special Collections team and the wider library. On the side of opportunity, I have not been constrained by existing practice or forced to tie in with developments planned and administered outside of my immediate control. This means that I have felt able to narrow my research focus around *participatory* approaches according to my own interests, and I have had a relatively free reign in choosing the stream in which a *participatory* approach feels appropriate. The stream within the Library in which I have found it possible to position my research is targeted collecting.

### *Developing an issue-based context*

Having made the decision to focus on collecting, I was essentially looking for a specific area of collecting in which to take a *participatory* approach. To inform my choice, I relied on the library's strategy (2009-2014) for initial guidance. As described in the strategy, the Wellcome Library's (and therefore the Special Collections team's) targeted collecting is focused on proactively sourcing archive material around the trust's global health themes. Within the strategy, these global health themes are referred to as:

- Disease
- Mental health and neuroscience
- Public health
- Inheritance.

Disease	Mental health and neuroscience	Public health	Inheritance
<b>Existing strengths</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Jenner manuscripts</li> <li>✓ Doll papers</li> <li>✓ Parkes-Weber papers</li> <li>✓ Lister Institute records</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bowlby papers</li> <li>✓ Melanie Klein papers</li> <li>✓ Ticehurst Hospital records</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ MOH reports</li> <li>✓ Marie Stopes papers</li> <li>✓ Ephemera collection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Crick papers</li> <li>✓ Sanger lab notebooks</li> <li>✓ Medawar papers</li> <li>✓ Eugenics Society archive</li> </ul>
<b>Areas for potential development</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Images (new surgical and diagnostic imaging techniques)</li> <li>➤ Medical filmmakers' notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Public and patient memoirs and art</li> <li>➤ Archives of neurologists and neuroscientists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ephemera associated with 2007 smoking ban, HFE Bill, PROTEST</li> <li>➤ Special interest websites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lab notebooks, emails, logs etc, generated by investigators at Sanger Institute</li> <li>➤ AV material relating to the Human Genome Mapping Project</li> </ul>

**Table 4.1: 'How targeted collecting might affect the development of our collections'**

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I looked at these four themes in relation to current representations within the archives and manuscripts collections, focusing on how the Special Collections team are beginning to address under-representations within these themes, and where under-representation or bias might be addressed by taking a *participatory* approach. Essentially, I was assessing these four areas in relation to their *participatory* potential. Asking the question: does the current representation raise issues such as marginalization that could be tackled by taking a participatory approach?

My unease at seeking out a social issue (i.e. marginalization's within the current collections) upon which to hang the *participatory* practice was ever present at this point. It is undeniably a backward approach to the application of Participatory Action Research (PAR). In my research, the methodology has dictated the issue rather than the issue dictating the methodology. This brings with it a whole set of complications and questions, the most challenging of which lie around a consideration of the fundamental validity of the research endeavor.

Using Table 4.1 as a guide in discussions with the Special Collections team, there was an emergence of *participatory* potential in two of the global health themes: disease and mental health/neuroscience. In relation to disease, the Special

Collections team had identified an under-representation in relation to HIV and its impact on individuals and society as a whole. At the time, the team were in fact in early stage negotiations with a range of potential depositors to try and address what was perceived to be a collection gap. However, on further investigation into whether this could be a potential area of application, the team's favoured approach to securing the collections appeared unlikely to leave as much potential for exploring *participatory* approaches as I felt I needed. The theme of mental health offered an alternative and, in discussion with the team, the current under-representation of 'patient' as opposed to 'expert' voices within the existing collections was highlighted as a potential participatory issue on which my research could be based. This carried with it the added advantage of having a more clearly articulated alignment with library wide strategy on targeted collecting, illustrated by Table 4.1, which carries a clear endorsement that public and patient memoirs have been recognized as an area for potential collection development within this global health theme.

### **Representation of the mental health field within the Wellcome's Archives and Manuscripts Collections**

In seeking to understand the representation of the mental health field within the archives and manuscripts collections held by the Wellcome Library, I focused on mental health as a shifting socio-historic landscape from the nineteenth century to the present. In my exploration of the Library's existing archive collections, I found that the most dominant and prevailing archival collection strength, across this time period, is focused around the personal papers of eminent 'psy' experts (psychiatric specialists, psychoanalysts, psychologists and related therapists). The Library holds a number of prominent archive collections in this area including the personal papers of Melanie Klein (PP/KLE), William Walters Sargant (PP/WWS), Robina Addis (PP/ADD), Ronald Arthur Sandison (PP/SAN) and the art therapist Edward Adamson (PP/ADA)<sup>8</sup>. There is also a strong nucleus of collections around professional 'psy' societies and groups including the Group Analytic Society (SA/GAS), the Jungian Umbrella Group (SA/JUG), and the British Psychological Society (PSY/BPS). The Library also holds the institutional records of a range of private

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<sup>8</sup> Authoritatively and unequivocally qualifying this statement with quantitative data is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, in the early stages of this research I did some basic preliminary categorizations of the Wellcome Library's archival representation of the mental health field from the nineteenth century to the present day. I located via their online catalogue and accessions database 128 distinct archive collections connected to the mental health field across this time period, and I found that 91 of those (71%) could be categorized as being the personal papers of 'psy' experts.

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy

asylums and mental hospitals including Ticehurst Hospital (1787-1975) and Camberwell House Asylum (1847-1853), representing another collection strength. Public and voluntary asylums are also represented across the collections mainly from within the personal papers of prominent 'psy' professionals. For example, an extensive body of material relating to Maudsley Hospital can be unearthed across the personal papers of Carlos Paton Blacker (PP/CPB), William Walters Sargant (PP/WWS), Siegmund Heinrich Foulkes (PP/SHF), Rosen Ismond (PP/ROS) and Henry McIlwaine (PP/MCI). This cross-fertilization of material across the Wellcome Library's collections in which the personal collections of prominent 'psy' experts also contain material relating to the mental institutions they worked for, and visa versa, unearths a socio-history in and of itself. It is a cross-fertilization that testifies to the networks underpinning the evolution of the 'psy' disciplines. There is also a smaller range of material clustered around the personal papers of campaigners, pressure group members and charity workers active in the mental health field such as Dorothy Silberston (PP/DSI) who was a pivotal member of the National Schizophrenia Fellowship (now Rethink). Here too, the inter-relationships between individuals, groups and institutions can be traced. For example, in collections such as the Robina Addis Papers (PP/ADD) there is material relating to her career as a psychiatric social worker, but also material relating to her role as a pivotal member of the National Institute for Mental Health (later MIND), the World Federation for Mental Health, and other bodies. The third sector within the mental health field is represented not just in individual personal papers, but also through a variety of organizational archives including the archive of the Mental After Care Association (SA/MAC) and the recently acquired archive of the mental health charity MIND (SA/MIN). The library also holds a growing nucleus of material relating to charities concerned with advocating more generally for patient rights, the largest of which is the Patients Association Archive (SA/PAT), where there is a significant body of material concerning mental health patients. Recognized by the Special Collections staff as areas of notable weakness, are archives that represent and document relatively recent socio-historic shifts in the mental health field. In particular, archive collections relating to the psychiatric consumer/survivor movements that begun to emerge in the 1970s (see Spandler, 2006, p.52-67), and personal archives of psychiatric consumer/survivors, and other individuals with lived experience of mental health (see Chapter 10). In relation to the latter, two recent acquisitions are indicative of an attempt to shift the socio-historical weight of the collections away from the 'psy' expert and the mental institution, towards archives in which survivors/consumers are representing themselves more autonomously<sup>9</sup>. The first,

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<sup>9</sup> With the exception of the Pam Maudsley Collection (PP/PMY) and the Audrey Amiss



acquired in 2011 directly from the creator, is the diaries of Pam Maudsley (PP/PMY). This collection is described in the library catalogue's interim description as:

A mixture of handwritten and printed work, along with paintings, sketches, drawings, relevant newspaper articles and ephemera that detail Pam Maudsley's journey through the mental health system and her close relationship with her therapist. Much of her therapy was informed by Jungian thinking, and includes material on the interpretation of dreams. These diaries, covering the period 1979-2011, detail a psychological journey of self discovery. They record Pam Maudsley's personal journey of individuation, including extensive study and interpretation of the many dreams, imagery (especially active imagination), symbols, evolution and the processes involved in psychological development and inner healing. The journey through the mental health system, therapeutic community and the relationship with her therapists are all documented; many of the diary entries take the form of letters to them (Wellcome Library, 2011).

The second, acquired between 2014 and 2015, from the family of the now deceased creator, is the Audrey Amiss Archive (PP/AMI). Audrey was a trained artist and also a diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic, and the collection taken in by the Wellcome comprises a significant body of her artwork along with her scrapbooks and additional personal ephemera (this acquisition is described and discussed in detail in Chapter 10). However, both of these collections currently remain closed to the public awaiting cataloguing.

Foucault's body of writing addresses the power/knowledge nexus and its relationship to truth. He suggests that:

Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general gaze" of truth – that is, types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances that enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Foucault, 1994, p.131).

Across his accounts of the history of madness (1965), the medical gaze (1975) and the creation of expert knowledge categories from human experience (1975); it is possible to trace how the establishment of a discourse, that acts as a regime of truth, is dependent on the creation of bodies of knowledge. The 'archive' acts as a body of knowledge. As such it is central to the establishment and perpetuation of discourse and is central to regimes of

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Collection (PP/AMI), the collections discussed here are not referenced in the bibliography. Details of these collections can be found by entering the unique reference codes (given in the text) into the Wellcome Library's archives and manuscript catalogue's search interface available at:

<http://archives.wellcomelibrary.org/DServe/dserve.exe?&dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqCmd=Search.tcl>

truth. The archive is a means of determining what can be said, and what can be known, and what is considered true. Therefore, representation in the archive matters. Archives establish not just the past, what has been said, but also the present and the future. In Foucauldian terms they can be understood as 'formal systemizations' that give 'functionalist coherence' (Foucault, 1980, p.31) to particular perspectives. They are bodies of knowledge that construct the world. The processes of capturing, fixing and organizing that are inextricably bound into traditional professional understandings of the 'archive' can be understood as a mechanism through which it is possible to objectify those gazed upon, reducing them to categories, data and statistics that can be ordered and controlled. It matters then that individuals with lived experience of mental health appear predominately as objects in the archive collections held by the Wellcome. It matters that such individuals exist predominantly in the case notes of medical professionals, and in the columns of asylum admission registers. It matters that this historical pattern of objectification is still an ongoing reality in most of the material the team takes in within the present. It matters because the 'archive' has the power to subjugate:

By subjugated knowledges I mean two things: on the one hand, I am referring to historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formalized systemization...On the other hand, I believe that by subjugated knowledges one should understand something else, something which in a sense is altogether different, namely a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to the task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity (Foucault, 1980, p.81-82).

Actively seeking to shift the balance to give the subjugated space to speak becomes an imperative because, as Foucault makes clear, it is the re-emergence of the subjugated that enables critique of the status quo:

I also believe that it is through the re-emergence of these low ranking knowledges (such as the psychiatric patient...), and which involve what I would call a popular knowledge (*le savoir des genes*) though it is far from being a general commonsense knowledge, but is on the contrary a particular, local, regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity, and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it – that it is through the reappearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work (Foucault, 1982, p.93).

Yet, enabling voice and facilitating spaces for self-representation in ways that is not overly simplistic or celebratory, and in ways that does not recourse to the notion of essentialized identities or the notion of hidden histories that can be un-problematically recovered and

brought into view, is fraught with complexity. It is a complexity that this thesis seeks to engage with and explore. Echoes of this complexity reverberate through fields such as oral history that have sought to engage practically and theoretically with the notion of 'voice'. Flinn (2011) suggests that Paul Thompson's influential *Voice of the Past*, which was first published in 1978 setting out a vision for a 'transformed, democratized history in which the traditional barriers between the chroniclers and their audiences might be dissolved (Flinn, 2011), has since been problematized in various ways. Writers such as Luisa Passerini have cautioned against 'facile democratization' and 'complacent popularism' (Perks and Thomson, 1998, p.4) in relation to oral history projects that encourage members of oppressed groups to 'speak for themselves' (Perks and Thomson, 1998, p.4). Building on Passerini's criticisms, the Popular Memory Group have pointed to wider issues relating to the 'social production of memory' and, in particular, have surfaced how the radical potential of 'speaking for oneself' can be undermined by unequal relationships between professional historians and other participants in oral history projects (Perks and Thomson, 1998, p.4). This problematization has resulted in more nuanced calls for the creation of spaces for voice that go 'beyond mere recovery', viewing such spaces as 'always contested, critical territories' in which the 'writing of one's own story' is part of an active struggle for liberation involving the 'decolonization of the mind' (Hall 2005, quoting Fanon and Cabral, in Flinn, 2011). These more nuanced perspectives recognize that both individual and community representations of voice and identity are always historically and socially situated, always dynamic, and are often fragmentary and pluralistic rather than singular and whole. Indeed, my attempts at negotiating these critical tensions are described in the narrative carried in this thesis, as I problematize my attempts to 'give voice' in and through the archive of mental health recovery stories.

### Defining the participatory issue

At this point, I had established an issue on which to develop a transformational participatory approach: the marginalization of the voice of the individual with lived experience in representations of mental health within the Wellcome Library's archives and manuscripts collections. Six influencing factors have emerged from the iterative action research cycle that have guided my initial shaping of the participatory issue and ensuing *participatory* approach:

- The institutional context is the archives and manuscripts collections held within Special Collections at the Wellcome Library
- The archival context is targeted collecting

- The issue based context is the development of a mental health archive that is created by individuals with lived experience in order to give 'voice' to these individuals, enabling them to speak for themselves on their own terms.

## Chapter 5: Visions of the ‘Participatory’ at the Wellcome Library

In this chapter I am presenting a first analysis of the attitudinal stances within the Wellcome Library towards participatory archives based on a set of interviews with the Special Collections team and the Head of the Wellcome Library. These interviews were undertaken in order to build up a more nuanced perspective of institutional culture at the Wellcome Library in relation to participatory approaches to archives. The list of interviewees (by job title), interview dates, and interview guide is provided in Appendices A and B<sup>10</sup>

These interviews were conducted in January-February 2014, nearly two and a half years into my PhD when my relationship to the team was well established. My situatedness in relation to the Special Collections team is a complex layering of inside-outside positions. I am an outsider in the sense that I am not part of the core team. This necessarily creates a certain distance in that I do not share their role in managing and delivering the archives and manuscripts service. I am not involved in their day-to-day world as a participant, I enter it sporadically as an observer. However, I am an insider by virtue of the fact that my PhD research is supported and endorsed by the Wellcome, and in common with the many researchers that the Wellcome Trust supports through its various funding streams, this places me on the inside at arms length. Yet this placing of inside-outside doesn't do justice to the complexity of the relation. Importantly, I am an insider to the team in the sense that I share an identity with them as a professional archivist, we share the same knowledge base and specialism, and the enactment of their role, their perceptions, attitudes, and practices are comfortable and familiar to me. There is an understanding between us fused through our professional identity, which does much in establishing a common ground and a shared perspective. There are members of the Special Collections team whom I have got to know better in the course of my PhD research, with whom over coffees and lunch I have had an extended connection beyond the strict confines of a working relationship, but on the whole I would characterize my relationships with members of the Special Collections team as professional.

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<sup>10</sup>In line with the interview consent procedures that I established with the Wellcome staff that I interviewed, interviewees are referred to here (and elsewhere in the thesis where this interview data is drawn on) by a reference code formulated around job title. The exception to this is Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections (and one of my PhD supervisors) who is referred to by name with her consent.

Without exception I would characterize the tone of the interviews as fluid and open. I detected no resistance from any of the participants in speaking to me. I was expecting to detect a certain degree of guarding and protection both of self and of institution in the interviewees' responses. I was ready to pick up on the varying aspects of 'impression management' feeding into the dynamic of our conversation, to reflect on silences and refusals alongside what was spoken. The interviewees' knowledge of how the interviews were going to be used, and understanding of how readily identifiable they would be even when represented only by job title within my analysis undoubtedly shaped the boundaries around what was said and not said, there are always constraints and restrictions and subtle dynamics connected to context, positioning and interaction at play within the interview process (Portelli, 1991). Yet I found that the interviewees responded to me without perceptible hesitation or obvious manipulation, with at times startlingly frank and candid answers to my questions. This surprised me, but I make sense of their frankness in two ways. Firstly, in the interaction between us, I would suggest that the interviewees were positioning me more as an insider than an outsider. It was the common ground between us that shaped the dialogue, and contributed to the ease in which the participants reflected with me on their individual and collective attitudes and practice. They trusted that I would understand and be sympathetic to the trajectory of their perspective, and because of this they were willing to risk exposure with me, an exposure of both individual and collective notions, beliefs and attitudes that could be decoded unfavourably. Secondly, I believe the habitus (see p.113) of the Wellcome was influential in enabling the interviewees to feel comfortable in the act of critical reflection. The Wellcome Trust intrinsically supports and endorses dialogue and debate, and I sensed a security across the interviews that the risk of an employee being critical of the institution, or voicing perspectives that run counter to the collective stance, which in other settings may well have had more of a constricting influence on what could be said, was not felt strongly by the interviewees. The interviewees felt relatively safe that critical reflection back on self, professional practice and institution is perceived as legitimate in their context.

My interview with the Head of the Wellcome Library stands out as having a somewhat different dynamic where there was more of a distance between us as interviewer and interviewee. We shared a common interest in heritage, but did not share a background of professional archival training. Here also, because of his standing within the institution, I was more consciously aware that he was enacting

the role of 'institutional representative' speaking on behalf of the Wellcome Library, with this enactment of role conditioning his responses. This enactment of 'institutional representative' speaking as 'we' rather than 'I' in fact tied in neatly with my reasons for seeking to interview him. I wanted to use our interview as a means of gaining perspective on the ways in which the attitudes and practices within Special Collections are constituted and conditioned by the broader environment of the Library, so I expected (and in fact wanted) him to speak on the Library's behalf. This enactment of 'institutional representative' where the interviewee was choosing to speak less from an individual perspective and more as a conduit to represent the collective view as dictated by their institutional role, was to some extent, also at play in my interview with Jenny Haynes, the Head of Special Collections, with whom I have the most complex set of inter-relations as she is also one of my PhD supervisors. In this case, firmly assuming the role of 'Head of Special Collections' was mutually agreed on between us as a necessary means of disentangling the variety of positions in which we interact, and in which I have got to know her perspectives on participatory approaches. Yet in the course of the interview, she dipped in and out of speaking as a conduit to represent a collective institutional perspective, at points adopting a more individual stance particularly when her personal perspectives around participation were at odds with the institutional stance she was representing. In this dipping in and out of 'I' and 'we' positions, her interview in fact follows the same pattern as the others done with members of the Special Collections team who move deftly in and out of roles and stances, making distinctions between their personal views, their perception of the collective view within the team, and the broader institutional stance taken by the Wellcome Library and beyond that the Wellcome Trust. Within this movement, each interviewee was also reflecting on the points at which these different stances coincide and also potentially clash. These moves between stances and positions with reflection on their inter-relation also looked outwards on a different trajectory in respect of the interviewees positioning within the professional archival field. Here again, moves between 'I' as individual professional, and 'we' as a collective of professionals were continuously at play. These interviews therefore speak into the complexity of the social conditioning through which the team's individual attitudes around 'participatory approaches' are fashioned.

I have a responsibility to represent the interviewees responses to my questions in the spirit in which they were given to me, as a willingness to open up to critical

questioning and reflection. The interviews were a dialogue in which we were unraveling the localized specificity of how things are done and perceived within this particular team, and in looking into this localized context, I questioned the interviewees and stood back from their answers to some extent. However, also running through the interviews, there were moments of a joint troubling of the notion of the professional archivist in relation to participatory approaches, and at these points I was very much drawn in and alongside, musing with the interviewees on our shared constitution and the ways in which it both enables and constrains what we do. As I build this analysis, I will try and keep my own perspectives in view.

Lying beneath this first analysis of the attitudes and stances around participatory archives, is the complexity of the relationship between me, this research, and its host institution. In seeking to position the archive of mental health recovery stories as a tool that speaks back into and troubles the biased representations of mental health in the Library's archive collections, I have struggled to orientate myself in relation to my host institution. I am both inside and outside, within and against. Therefore, am I, this research, and the archive seeking to take an oppositional stance to the team and their praxis? Am I/we seeking to expose, to trouble, to dialogue, to transform the Wellcome's attitudes on participation, representation, and social justice? This first analysis was written at a time when I was more inclined to take an oppositional line. This will itself be returned to and troubled again in Chapter 10 which offers a repositioned perspective, and a more empathetic interpretation in which I draw much closer into an exploration of the dynamic complexity enacted between this research and its host.

### Exploring attitudes to the 'participatory' at the Wellcome Library

Is undertaking a participatory exercise something we would be comfortable with? Well we have never done it, it's uncharted territory, we are not used to it, we don't think about doing it. We are not necessarily anti-, but the simple fact is that it is just not on the radar (Archivist 4).

This quotation provides an initial window into perceptions and practice around the 'participatory archive' within Special Collections at the Wellcome Library. In this succinct remark, echoed across the interviews, the collective stance on participation is writ large: participatory approaches to archival practice are not yet 'on the radar'. Despite the obvious interest in participatory archives inherent in the decision to sponsor and support my research, being participatory is not an embedded part of



the horizon through which the team frames or carries out their own archival responsibilities. It is distinctly 'other'. In practical terms, participatory approaches to archives (of any kind) are not an embodied part of the way in which the team works; but more than that a consideration of the 'participatory' appears to sit beyond the framework of archival concepts which currently have currency within the team. I sensed through the interviews a polite interest; a critical and reflective awareness of the potential value and difficulties inherent in participatory archival work; but no passion for the 'participatory'; no imperative to embrace it; no fight to legitimate it. In this respect, I stood at odds from the interviewees, as participation was very firmly on my radar, and I had spent the last three years doing it, wrestling with it, attempting to make sense of it. Its marginal relevance to the approach to practice embedded within Special Collections was something I had known from the outset, yet I wanted to make sense of. I wanted to disentangle why, what had become so important to me, remained distant at the institution within which my research was positioned.

As I have struggled to make sense of the interviews, I felt that I was trying to unearth something of the embodied and implicit dispositions within the team on archives and the role of the archivist. I was trying to read the relationship between these states of mind and the archival practice that is enacted; and to understand this relationship in relation to the specific organizational context of the Wellcome Library; and the wider context of the professional (and academic) archival field. I therefore turned to Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital, to give some concrete form to what I sensed emerging from the data. It is my hope that in introducing Bourdieu's social theory into my analysis I have found a useful frame of reference for exploration.

I first became interested in Bourdieu's social theory through my readings around power, which I have travelled through in growing recognition that it is the attempted disruption of existing power relations that lies at the heart of 'participatory practice'. Bourdieu's social theory seeks to address relations between subjectivity, culture, social structure and action. Seeking to address how stratified systems of hierarchy and domination can persist without powerful resistance or conscious recognition by those within them. Bourdieu specifically focuses on how cultural resources, processes and institutions can 'hold individual groups in competitive and self-perpetuating hierarchies of domination' in a 'struggle over valued resources' (Swartz, 1997, p.7). Bourdieu is concerned with how actors pursue strategies to

achieve their interests within fields of struggle, and in doing so how the social stratification order is unwittingly reproduced by those that sit within it (Swartz, 1997, p.7). Bourdieu offers a relational view of the social world but it is one in which relations are 'competitive as opposed to cooperative, unconscious rather than conscious and hierarchical rather than egalitarian' (Swartz, 1997, p.63). His recurring themes are distinction, domination and misperception (Swartz, 1997, p.63). Bourdieu's theory is steeped in recognition of inequality and it stresses the conflicted nature of the social world; so here I acknowledge that I approach my application of Bourdieu's work with relative caution, because to describe the world in these terms is in many ways unsettling and uncomfortable.

## Introducing Bourdieu's habitus, field and capital

### *Bourdieu's habitus*

Bourdieu's social theory relies on three central concepts that are interweaved: habitus, field and capital. At this point, an explanation of these central concepts is required. An individual's habitus is an active sediment or residue of his/her past that shapes perception, thought and action moulding practice in a regular way. It consists in the individual's dispositions, schemas<sup>11</sup>, forms of know-how and competence, functioning unconsciously. An individual's habitus is acquired in structured social contexts whose pattern, purpose and underlying principles are incorporated by the individual as both an inclination and a manner and method of working. Bourdieu conceptualizes the habitus as a 'structured structure' because it disposes the individual to continue with particular forms of practice but it is also a 'structuring structure' because it is equally responsible for the generation of the practice it perpetuates:

A system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes (Bourdieu, 1990a p.53 in Swartz 1997, p.100).

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<sup>11</sup> A schema is an underlying organizational pattern or structure, or a conceptual framework that provides the basis by which someone relates to the event he or she experiences. In Kantian epistemology it is a concept by which an object of knowledge or an idea of pure reason may be apprehended (see <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/schema>).

As argued by Crossley (2001a, p.82), the notion of habitus chimes with the circular relationship between individual and society proposed by Durkheim who argues that society shapes the individual, but that society at the same time depends entirely upon the actions and dispositions of individuals for its own existence. For Bourdieu, society and the individual sit in a dialectal relationship as two dimensions of the same social reality (Swartz, 1997, p.96). Habitus operates like an underlying grammar that has been assimilated by the individual from social experience, so as a grammar structures a language whilst still allowing for a multitude of forms of expression, so habitus prescribes the possible whilst allowing for strategy and innovation. Bourdieu suggests that if individuals are seen as players in a game then their habitus provides them with their 'feel for the game' in which they use skill and strategy, to facilitate the competent pursuit of goals. Habitus predisposes agents to act in particular ways because habitus is the assimilation of the 'structure of the game' defining the realms of the possible for the individual without preventing the individual from acting strategically. Habitus evokes the idea of a deeply internalized set of master dispositions that generate action (Swartz, 1997, p.101) balanced by the idea that individuals are not mere rule followers or norm obeyers but improvisers who respond dispositionally to the opportunities and constraints offered by various situations (Swartz, 1997, p.100). Habitus results from early socialization in which external structures are internalized. As a result broad parameters and boundaries around what is possible or unlikely for a particular group in a stratified social world develop through socialization. Thus on the one hand, habitus sets structural limits for action. On the other hand, habitus generates perceptions, aspirations and practices that correspond to the structuring properties of earlier socialization (Swartz, 1997, p.103). In this way habitus allows for a theory of action that is 'durable though adaptive, reproductive though generative...and the product of particular social conditions though transposable to others' (Swartz, 1997, p.101).

Each individual agent's habitus will be different to some degree, as no two individuals share the same life trajectory but Bourdieu emphasizes the fact that individual biographies are strands in a collective history as the individual belongs to a variety of groups in which habitus is developed. Individual habitus is therefore always a variant of a collective root:

Since the history of the individual is never anything other than a certain specification of the collective history of his class or group, each individual's system of dispositions may be seen as a structural variant of all other group or class habitus, expressing the difference between the trajectories and positions inside or

outside the class (Bourdieu, 1977, p.86 in Crossley, 2001, p.94).

My interest in Bourdieu's habitus is rooted in my belief that it can help to articulate and explain the archival dispositions that I sense in the interview data. Is it possible to apply the concept to the archivists within Special Collections (and also by extension to myself) to suggest that we hold a collective disposition as 'professional archivists' an 'archival habitus' formed in and perpetuated through our professional archival education? How do the differing fields in which we practice then fracture, differentiate and condition that shared 'archival habitus'? Can I detect an individualistic or shared 'feel for the game' from the interviewees and by extension myself, and how does this relate to our internalization of external structures? Fundamentally, in the context of my research can an analysis of 'habitus' be used to help to explain why 'participatory practice' remains somewhat at the margins in the local context under scrutiny here?

### *Bourdieu's field*

Bourdieu's habitus accounts for individual and collective dispositions that both generate and shape action, so what is added by the concept of field is an account of the context of action (Crossley: 2001, p.97) and the respective role that context plays on shaping the action in interaction with habitus. Bourdieu defines 'field' as:

A network or configuration of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc). (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.97 in Swartz, 1997, p.117).

Field denotes arenas of production in which there is a circulation and appropriation of goods, services, knowledge or status. It describes the competitively relational positions that are held by actors in their struggle to monopolize within these arenas. For Bourdieu, modern societies are differentiated into interlocking fields, some of which coincide with institutions such as 'law' or the 'family' but fields can assume sub- and trans-institutional forms too. The boundaries around fields cannot be viewed in any ways as fixed, as boundary questions are themselves part of the struggle across and within fields. My understanding of field (and my use of it in this analysis) is that it is a means to define the structures of relations in which *a struggle for position and legitimation of that position is*

*played out*. Therefore, I would argue that individuals operate in a variety of different fields (or domains of association), each field contributing in different ways to the generation and reproduction of individual and collective habitus.

### *Bourdieu's capital*

Bourdieu encourages us to explore 'agent action' by combining an understanding of dispositions (habitus) with a grasp upon the state '-of the game-' and the agent's location in it (field). Agent's actions are shaped by habitus and the logic of 'the game' as it unfolds. Field and habitus are locked in a circular relationship. Involvement in the field shapes the habitus that, in turn, shapes the actions that reproduce the field (Crossley, 2001, p.87). However, the concept of 'capital' is needed to articulate the range of resources available in a given field that have an exchange value. Capital is therefore applied to *any* resource that has become an object of struggle to be sought after. Bourdieu generally speaks of four generic types of capital: economic (money and property); cultural (goods and services including educational qualifications); social (networks and useful relationships) and symbolic (status and legitimation). The central argument is that both economic and non-economic goods and services can become sources of power (capital) that can be accumulated and exchanged. The field defines what capital has currency and accords it with its relative value. The field also conditions the ways in which it can be converted into or exchanged for other types of capital. The concepts of habitus, field and capital are inextricably interlinked. Capital is another factor alongside dispositions and positions in an ongoing field that shapes possibilities for action. Agents are constrained by what they can 'afford' to do. The relative accumulation of capital (and its relative value) defines an agent's (or group of agents') position in the field, which then determines the conditions in which their experiences are shaped and habitus is formed, which in turn feeds back into the constitution of the field. Habitus is important because agreements over capital are rooted in habit; so deeply rooted in fact that it is difficult for the agents themselves to recognize the agreements that they are a part of generating and perpetuating.

In the context of this research then, can I identify the forms of capital accorded value and used in exchange by the team and the ways that this then feeds habitus and field? And what bearing does the overall interaction between habitus, field and capital have on articulating and explaining what I perceive as a collective reserve (or lack of legitimation) for participatory approaches to archives?

## Maintaining professional control of the archive

Fundamental to what I see emerging as a shared 'archival habitus' within the team, which I also sit on the inside of, is the notion of the archivist as 'professional' who by virtue of their archival education has attained specialist 'expert' knowledge on what archives are and the processes that sit behind collecting, appraising, preserving and making archives accessible. Across the interviews, this perception of self as 'professional expert' regularly surfaces:

Anna: So in broad terms how would you sum up the stance on participation? How open are you collectively to inviting people in to your internal processes?

Archivist 3: Well, a stance – do you mean our stance within the department?

Anna: Yes, lets go with that.

Archivist 3: I think we are fairly open to outside people. Insights are done by people outside the library as well as staff. We have guest blog posts as well. But in terms of cataloguing, appraisal. No. We don't invite. Not to my knowledge. We don't invite external input. We don't need it. We don't want everyone sticking their uneducated oar in and telling us what to do to be honest. I don't think a lawyer would want that for their profession. We are all professional archivists and we know what we are doing and we are not closed-minded but I don't know how that would work having external people having an influence on how we run things.

This interviewee was very aware of the impact of her words. They were spoken with a degree of irony, knowing how they would come across, they were spoken as a way of dramatizing and pushing on the hidden extreme in our position as professional archivists; that in claiming our expertise we necessarily marginalize others into the position of the 'uneducated' and 'ill-qualified'. This interviewee deftly points to the bind inherent in assuming a professional identity, that professionalism is fundamentally a 'claim over' and that relinquishing this 'claim over' is therefore the heart of where the tension around the notion of 'participatory approaches' lies for those whose disposition has been forged in and through a professional archival identity.

In Bourdieu's terms, this 'specialist knowledge' acquired through post-graduate education is a form of cultural capital that is shared across (and highly valued by) by archivists. This cultural capital is readily converted into a symbolic power where the archivist, by virtue of their professional status conferred in and through their academic study, obtains sufficient recognition to establish their meanings and practice as the legitimate vision of the archival endeavor. In the interview extract given above it is possible to trace the links between

archival education (implicit in the juxtaposition of the 'uneducated oar' of the 'other') with notions of professionalism and the establishment of the right to control the archive. The interviewee articulates her personal views in terms of her membership of the 'archive profession' as a whole; that she perceives as neither wanting nor needing to take a 'participatory approach'. For this particular interviewee, participation as an act that invites others to share a right to control is an act that encroaches on the archivist's symbolic power; a power that is legitimated and reinforced by a distinction between those who possess an archival education and a professional status; and others who do not. In this particular interview, a sense of a struggle to maintain the archivist's position, and participation as a potential threat to that position comes over quite strongly, and this resonates with Bourdieu's notions of fields as arenas of ongoing struggle in which agents compete for position through cognitive and political symbolic struggles over knowledge and recognition (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 187).

In this case, the interviewee is positioning their personal views on 'participation' as being representative of a shared collective professional perspective; a shared 'habitus' or 'feel for the game' amongst 'archival professionals' as a group who seek to defend the professional boundary against interference from 'others'. Flinn (2010) wrote around the existence of a strong viewpoint within the 'archive profession' that perhaps sees 'participatory approaches' as an attack on archival professionalism. Flinn suggests that there is:

[A] powerful and genuine strand of thinking within the archive profession..which one might loosely term 'traditional'. Although there are now many user-generated content archive and heritage projects in existence, and terms such as participatory archives, Archives 2.0 and even History 2.0 are an increasingly common part of professional discourse, some, perhaps many archivists ... remain deeply skeptical about the need for a democratization of the archive (unpaginated).

Writing in the context of 'engagement', 'participation' and 'co-production' in the development of public services, Bovaird (2007) suggests that when professionally led services start to branch into models of co-production with users and communities there is usually evidence of initial professional resistance. Initial perceptions amongst professional groups reveal an underlying assumption that gains in status among co-producing clients will come at their expense (p.857). Involvement is often framed in terms of 'interference' and participation is perceived as an unnecessary and unwelcome challenge to 'expertise' (Bovaird, 2007, p.852) suggesting that a view of 'participation' as an unwelcome attack on professionalism is by no means limited to the professional archive sector.

Although the metaphor of the ‘other’ imposing their ‘uneducated oar’ on professional practice is perhaps the strongest articulation against ‘participation’ that I came across within the interviews in its assertion that ‘no we don’t invite? Why would we? We are professionals so we know what we are doing’, this was by no means an isolated viewpoint within the team. The value that is placed by the interviewees on their specialist archival knowledge gained through education appears to be a *uniting* theme weaving in and out of the interviews as a whole. I would argue that there is an emerging shared perception across the team that the professional archivist is the embodiment of ‘specialist expertise’ therefore it is necessary and right to draw a distinction around the structure of archival procedures; which are to be overseen by the archivist. The prevailing viewpoint across the team is not necessarily that others should be kept out (as indicated in the extract above); it is that if others are ‘let in’ then the archivist as ‘specialist’ must remain in control. This perception is summarized in the following interview extract:

Anna: What do you think the library stance is on participation by non-library staff in activities like cataloguing, or interpretation or acquisition decisions?

Senior Archivist 1: The library as a whole regards the idea of letting ‘the great unwashed’ [pause] -that is probably not the right word really but letting unqualified people loose on archival or librarianship operations - with some suspicion and I think they are right to be a little bit cautious about it because we have to assume I think that our professional training has some value. These things that we are trained to do and the assumptions we are trained to have - do have value otherwise why bother doing it? If we think they are worth doing to the extent of going through years of training to do it then it is worth getting a little bit nervous about getting someone else involved. I think the question should be not should we let this person come in? The question is more that given that they are not a specialist how can we arrange it so we can make use of their knowledge while at the same time setting up parameters so that they do the archivally correct thing.

There are many traces across the interviews in which I detect this distinction that the team places around the specialist archival knowledge embodied by the professional archivist. In a discussion around cataloguing, when asked about opening up the process, one interviewee talks of the ‘skills involved in cataloguing that people outside of the profession aren’t really aware of’, meaning that the ‘archivist needs to have that final authority and control’ owing to understanding ‘how a catalogue needs to be structured’ (Project Cataloguer 2). In fact ‘us’ and ‘them’ distinctions can be located across the interviews and these ‘Archivist/Other’ dichotomies take a variety of forms in which the Archivist is referred



to as the 'qualified', 'professional' 'educated', 'experienced', 'specialist' who by virtue of these qualities should retain control of the archive:

Well I may be displacing my own particular neurosis on the profession as a whole but I suspect this goes across the entire archive and library sector that we are willing to talk Web 2.0 and engagement and interactivity but at the same time we are very aware that we retain a responsibility to retain some sort of control over kitemarked, quality stamped information, which coincidentally enough happens to be the information that we produce! Other people's information needs to be in some way distinct. We would generally feel that if we were opening up a catalogue to be crowd-sourced in some way, that the finished product needs to show in some rather obvious way— this is the core spine that was done by an Archivist and here are the comments that are added by unqualified other people (Senior Archivist 1).

What I see emerging as the overarching shared disposition on 'participatory approaches' to archives within the Special Collections team is that others may well have a part to play within the archive; participation itself is a potentially feasible approach, but it must not involve a radical removal of authority from the archivist. The archivist's overarching control is necessary and is to be protected; the professional boundary is to be maintained, professional archivists immersed in the disposition forged in their professionalism simply aren't ready to turn themselves over to the notion of an 'anarchist collective' (Senior Archivist 1).

In Bourdieu's social theory, the continual struggle for legitimation and recognition in a field is fuelled by the fact that all human action is fundamentally 'interest-orientated' requiring a strategy that maximizes 'material and symbolic profit' to bring about advantages from situations. Rather uncomfortably then, Bourdieu's social theory would suggest that the distinctions that the team places around the role of the archivist and the desire to retain 'control' of the archive is part of an interest-orientated struggle to conserve the societal standing of the 'professional archivist'. There are moments within the interviews where individual interviewees indicate an awareness of the possibility of 'self-interest' being an underlying factor in seeking to maintain and reinforce the authoritative control of the archivist:

Anna: What do you think prevents the library from approaching collection development in that [approach embodied in the archive of mental health recovery stories] sort of way?

Senior Archivist 1: [...]It's just a mindset that is ingrained; this surrendering of control; what we will do is facilitate the uploading of history direct by anyone who thinks they have got something to contribute! That comes very hard; I think there is

an element of self-protection there [...]Well if that's the case what is there left for me to do?

However, what comes through more strongly from the interviews as a whole is that the shared disposition to value the expertise of the archivist (librarian or curator) and the drive to maintain an authoritative boundary around the systems, structures, and procedures that the 'specialist' uses to control the archive is not perceived by the team to be only (or even primarily) motivated by 'self-interest' (i.e. to maintain and legitimate a societal position); on the contrary, these systems, structures, and procedures are the very thing that enables the professional to fulfill their societal responsibilities towards others. Altruism not self-interest is perceived to be at play. The motivation to exercise overarching control over the systems, standards, procedures and processes sitting around the archive lies in seeking to protect not 'self-interest' but the interests of others. The professional has a 'duty of care' to others by virtue of their role and position within the field:

Anna: Do you think there is potential for this shift [widening notions of audience within the Wellcome Library] to go that one step further and move in a more participatory direction?

Head of Library: [...]I don't think we are able to be governed - is that the right word? I don't think we are always able to enter into a completely equal power relationship with others because we have certain obligations on us as a library or archive that we have to fulfill [...]The fact that collections relating to medicine- perhaps more than most collections- reveal a lot about aspects of individuals' lives means that it is not always appropriate or feasible for that information to be shared more widely; and sometimes with a 'duty of care' hat on, we need to be the ones taking decisions which we do because we believe that we have an obligation to do so, even if an individual creator feels that this is material that they would be happy to share.

For the Head of the Wellcome Library, this 'duty of care' to others is multifaceted. The archivist (librarian and curator) has a duty of care to use their systems, processes and practices to protect subjects, creators and depositors of records using their specialist knowledge to make ethical and lawful judgments on access to information. They also have a 'duty of care' to ensure the longevity of the material under their control to take the past and present 'record' into the future in ways that can guarantee its use and re-use over time. This 'duty of care' to the future emerges in the context of a discussion on maintaining professional control over metadata:

I think we would be reluctant to say that we should exist in an ecosystem where anyone could change anything. There is value by nature of our expertise in having a description to which other people could add but could not erase; that is a practical motive in that we are managing a collection that has been here for a

hundred years, and we hope will be here for another 100 years. And there is some kind of basic documentation that needs to be secure and continuous if we want these collections to be useful to society over time, which is why you couldn't completely open up the catalogue (Head of Library).

What is perhaps unsettling to suggest in this context is Bourdieu's assertion that interested action gains in legitimation and efficacy the less visible its self-interested dimension is to the actors themselves:

The most profitable strategies are usually those 'produced on the hither side of all calculation and in the illusion of the most "authentic" sincerity, by a habitus, objectively fitted to the objective structures (Bourdieu 1977, p.214 in Swartz p.70).

Therefore the ability to point to 'altruistic' motivations for seeking to conserve professional control of the archive is the very thing that is most effective in legitimating the 'self interest' at play. My own opinion is that 'altruistic' motivations cannot simply be dismissed as 'self-interest' in disguise as Bourdieu suggests; rather I would suggest that altruism and self-interest can be present in the same 'act'. Our blind spot is perhaps that we tend to pay attention to our altruistic motivations rather than exploring and exposing the elements of 'self-interest' inherent in those same actions.

Where do I place myself in relation to these emerging views on the professional disposition and the Special Collections team's enactment of the habitus of the 'professional archivist' that surfaces across the interviews as a means to legitimate professional control of the archive? I can best describe myself as occupying a within/against location. I am not removed and distanced from using my professional status as a claim and a right in relation to the archive. In my years as an archival practitioner, I have used my professional training as a form of symbolic capital to secure my role in managing archive services. I share the same 'feel for the game' in which I have carved out a role for myself by claiming a specialism and an expertise, that makes me best placed to manage archive services and get paid for doing so. Economic necessity requires that in the future I may well continue to trade in these terms, using my professionalism as leverage to secure a place in the field. I cannot turn my back on the game; I am part of it, complicit in it, a beneficiary of it. Yet, I am troubled by it. Participatory approaches, sit in tension with the very claims my professionalism rests on, and I am aware that to seek to have a foot in both camps, as both professional archivist and participatory facilitator, requires the facing and resolution of a clash of dispositions. The Special Collections team envisage that in the future if participation does come onto the radar for them, this tension can be legitimately resolved

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
by enabling participation in a highly controlled manner that leaves the professional claim to specialist expertise intact, but the type of participation I have been enacting in the course of this research has sought a more thorough letting go of control. These tensions, and the extent to which I feel they have been (or indeed can be) adequately resolved in the participatory intervention I have been engaged in, will be explored in more depth in Chapters 7 and 8.

### Internal struggles for recognition of expertise

Can I really locate the Special Collections team in an 'interest-orientated' struggle to maintain authoritative control of the archive? Am I just overlaying Bourdieu's theory onto the interviews without finding evidence from the data itself to illustrate that there is a power struggle at play? I do find that a sense of struggle echoes through discussions in the interviews around this all-important notion of 'expertise'. Frequently, the arena of struggle that is described in the interviews focuses on internal competition (i.e. between archivists and other agents within the Wellcome Library) to lay claim to 'expertise' in and around the archive. It is in these discussions on internal relations where the interviewees became animated, passionate, and seemed to hold the strongest opinions. My sense is that tensions that may arise from 'participatory practice' can only be talked of in abstract terms by the team since 'participatory practice' is currently so far 'off the radar' (Archivist 4); it is a theoretical discussion that can therefore avoid the heat of active contention. However, internal struggles for archival control are immediate and active, and therefore the interviewees 'feel' the contention much more as they actively engage in it. In this internal struggle, two archival dispositions emerge; the first comes from team members who limit the scope of the archivist's expertise to 'procedural' and 'functional' control of the archive. These team members constrain the archivist's knowledge (and therefore the archivist's right to control) to creating, maintaining and overseeing archival systems, standards, structures, and processes. The second disposition lays claim to 'procedural' and 'functional' expertise, but also seeks to extend notions of this expertise to include knowledge not just on process but on the subject and context of the archive, and to include aspects of 'interpretative' and 'communicative' control of the archive within the archivist's sphere of expertise. The distinction between these dispositions emerges from discussion with interviewees around what 'expert interpretation' may mean in the Library Strategy (WEL1). In some cases members of the team appear to place a functional limit on the Archivist's role:

Interpretation comes after the cataloguing. We should not be expected to be experts in the topic of the archive [...]So we are just making the researcher aware of what is there but we are not interpreting [...]We are not subject experts [...]I am a bit uncomfortable with an implication that we are subject experts because it is implying that there is a high expectation on us to deliver interpretation (Archivist 3).

This can be contrasted with the more prevalent disposition within the team that the archivist's procedural expertise blurs into expertise around the content of the archive placing them in a unique position to be able to communicate about the archive:

There was this idea mooted that we would be bringing in experts to interpret our collections [...]I don't think you are going to find somebody who knows more about an archive than the person that has just catalogued it; to suggest bringing in someone else to get the credit for finding out this information I find quite odd [...]We have just had a big shake up of our departments and the former Research and Scholarship Department is now Special Collections consisting of the Archivists and a few others and then there is this Scholarship Department and I'm personally against the idea that we have specialist scholars or experts in an area (Archivist 1).

At the heart of this contention are notions around the internal 'value' (capital) that is placed on these different types of expertise. Although the archivists themselves may place a high value on their 'functional' and 'procedural' knowledge, as the specialism in which they have been educated, there is a suspicion that this 'type' of specialist knowledge is not valued as highly internally as academically acquired subject knowledge (i.e. in-depth knowledge about the genre, period, discipline, subject or theme in which the archive contextually sits). The cultural capital gained from being educated to become a specialist archival professional does not have the same currency internally as cultural capital gained from subject or context related academic qualification. One of the archivist's commented that she 'gets the feeling that how we are perceived internally is that us humble archivists and librarians who don't really know anything...our expertise is not valued highly...in fact we are not viewed as experts at all...the Archivist is purely functional' (Archivist 1). The differences in the value placed internally on these different types of specialist knowledge are expressed by the team as manifesting in terms of economic capital (subject specialists have on occasion been placed on a higher pay grade when doing a similar job) and also in terms of social capital (subject specialists are given more access to networking and reputation-building opportunities):

Anna: I am trying to untangle this issue of expertise within the library, the extent to which there is internal competition to be viewed as the expert.

Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections: Well the analogy I use is Cinderella and the ugly sisters; so Cinderella is busy there doing the really unglamorous bulk processing of the collection while we have the ugly sisters gallivanting off to the ball on the international conference circuit with the 'expertise' to promote the collections. Big mistake because the people who do gain some knowledge of the collections are the people who process.

The internal competition for recognition requires the archivist to continually reinforce the value of their specialist knowledge internally. They must seek to increase its value as a currency to be traded into economic and social capital. The majority of the team therefore link 'procedural' expertise to 'subject and context' expertise (since this is the more highly valued type of expertise) suggesting that *through* processing the Archivist *becomes* the primary subject and context expert.

In the struggle for recognition and legitimation the team also called into question the internal assumption that academically recognized subject and context knowledge (i.e. that gained from having a PhD in a relevant academic discipline) can be easily converted into 'communicative' or even 'interpretive' expertise, suggesting that here too, they have just as much potential 'expertise' to offer. One Archivist phrased the argument as:

Just because you have studied the period doesn't mean you can communicate it any more effectively to different audiences. Immediately that 'academic excellence' is valued more highly, but why, when it doesn't necessarily help us to engage? (Archivist 1).

Some of the interviewees link the internal constraints that seem to be placed on the archivist's sphere of expertise to constraints on internal opportunities to contribute in key areas such as audience engagement. This does come across more strongly in some interviews than others, perhaps because the impact is 'felt' by some members of the team more than others. A few team members hold both an archival qualification and a PhD in a subject area relating to the collections, and can therefore more easily maneuver (i.e. they can lay claim to some of the more valued subject expertise which can be traded for opportunity). Interviewees without academically acquired subject and context expertise talk of 'silos' (Archivist 1) and 'limits to who is now allowed to contribute' (Archivist 2) to outreach and engagement.

So what relation does this internal struggle around 'expertise' and 'access to opportunity' have to barriers to 'participatory approaches'? Is there a relation here between this struggle and the fact that 'participatory approaches' appear low on the agenda for the

team? I see this struggle as one contributing factor in what is a very complex picture. I would suggest that one of the unintended affordances of this internal struggle is that the focus of the team's attention is on reinforcing (and even extending) the value of their specialist archival expertise. This then crowds out an impetus to turn attention to the potential value inherent in 'participatory approaches'. The interviewee who was most vocal on this issue encapsulates this in the comment that:

I wouldn't say that we want to control per se, our attitude isn't against participation, it's just that we are the people who are in charge of all the stuff here and now— we are the people doing it in this institution and we are doing it pretty well. It's not wanting to be in charge – no – it's not controlling information and contributions to that information – it's wanting people here to recognize that what we do is valuable and we are doing the job at hand quite well, thanks (Archivist 1).

The upshot of this is that in seeking internal recognition and legitimation, pointing out what is done well, and where the value in the archivist's expertise lies; the status quo is legitimated and the control apportioned to the archivist as expert is continually reinforced and perpetuated.

The notion of an internal institutional context becoming a space of conflict in which a competition for position and capital is enacted, is all too familiar to me from my own experiences as a practitioner. In common with the Special Collections team, I have most recently worked in a setting in which I have run an archive service that is embedded directly within a library with an adjoining museum service sitting within the same division. Carving out a space, and ensuring that we, as the smallest and poorest relation got an adequate slice of existing resources, was a constant game in which I regularly pulled on the notion of our expertise, and the specialist role we play, as a means to legitimate and even extend our position. Rather than situating myself at a distance to the lack of enthusiasm for the adoption of 'participatory approaches' within Special Collections, I know all too well, that this has been the case for me too. In the face of a larger battle for survival in which I have been fighting for the continued existence of my service, in the face of year-on-year budget cuts, developing a participatory strategy that might mount a challenge to the notion of the value inherent in archivists controlling and running the service is not an attractive proposition. It has undoubtedly been easier for me to experiment with 'participatory approaches' since I have been removed from the immediacy of fighting to keep a professionally led service up and running.

## Ingrained and embedded structures

It is so ingrained that [participation] is not our process – but partly it's because we have so much to do with our existing process that its actually very difficult to step back and have one's head clear enough and enough time to think over – are there other ways? (Senior Archivist 2).

Bourdieu's concept of habitus also draws attention to the ways in which agents internalize external structures as dispositions over time. In the context of the Special Collections team this helps to explain how the practical policies, procedures, standards and processes that sit around the archive become 'embodied' as the know-how, perceptions, and dispositions of the team members themselves, which in a circular feedback loop then sustains and perpetuates the archival structures themselves.

When asked directly during the interviews on how aligned they felt with special collection procedures and policies, I was told by the interviewees time and again 'very aligned' (Archive Assistant), 'generally in step' (Project Cataloguer 1), 'I can't think of where my personal opinions drastically contradict our practice here it's just minor gripes' (Archivist 1) or in one case the response was: 'actually I would say that the institutional policies have been moving towards my views!' (Archivist 2)

The team members describe their archival procedures to be in-line with that of a traditional archival collecting institution in the sense that they are set up to take in donations and deposits of archives from external bodies in line with the institutional 'targeted collecting' policy. The team is responsible for acquiring, appraising, arranging and describing incoming archives and making them accessible to the public. The management of the archival collections from acquisition to access is achieved through the enactment of a range of internal policies that reflect archival legislative requirements and professional best-practice procedures around acquisition, appraisal, description and access. In all of these procedures the Archivist is embedded as the 'authoritative controller' who acts in accordance with these professionally recognized and institutionally defined standards and policies. Contributions by others are possible at the edges of this control, and sometimes aspects of procedure are given over to para-professionals or volunteers, but always under the archivist's authoritative gaze. This embedding of the archivist as controller into the core procedures generates and perpetuates a collective 'feel for the game' based around the structural embedding of this control. One interviewee gets close to articulating this in the comment:



I think it is just what has become established practice I guess- that is probably the biggest barrier to participatory approaches I would say. Not necessarily just here but the archival field as well. It's all those implicit assumptions written in to what we do that become difficult to [dis]entangle as 'assumptions' and so go unchallenged (Archive Assistant).

I expected perhaps to detect a different stance from newer members of the team who not being as immersed in the organizational culture might be expected to show signs of having a different 'archival habitus' to the more established members of the team moulded in the context of their more recent archival education. Perhaps amongst the newer members of the team I would find more of an inclination to question the implicitly ingrained 'control of the archivist'. However, the newer members of the team speak more in terms of trying to build an 'archival habitus' through their work in Special Collections rather than coming with one formed through their educational experiences. The archives assistant who has recently completed a post-graduate archival qualification comments 'I think I am aligned with the views here. Probably because of my age I don't have such strong opinions because of lack of professional experience'. Similarly one of the other newer archivist's comments 'I think I am probably still trying to work out my own personal opinions, still probably forming my ideas about what I think, because it's not that long since I actually qualified as an archivist' (Project Cataloguer 2). What comes across in the interviews with the newer members of the team is a deep appreciation for the environment provided within Special Collections, an overwhelmingly positive response to the organizational context. This appreciation is summed up in the remarks of one relatively new member of the team, who at the time of the interviews was in Special Collections on a short-term contract:

Anna: So on a scale of 1 to 10, how happy are you in your current role?

Project cataloguer 1: I am a 10, yes.

Anna: My God, it's such a happy team!

Project cataloguer 1: I don't want to be on a short term contract – I want to stay – I feel like – and people have said this before – I feel really spoilt and lucky– the resources here, the amazing collections, the archivists here really know their stuff - so for someone like me, just starting out, being surrounded by experts who I can turn to at any point for advice and support. Amazing!

## Comfort as a barrier to change

Despite the internal struggle for recognition around 'archival expertise' described above, the interviewees collectively speak of Special Collections as a comfortable place to be. In general terms there is contentment within the team, there is a feeling that they do things well, that procedures are tight and well-informed, that the public is well served. There is therefore no immediately obvious reason to seek change.

However, it is important here to acknowledge that of course participatory approaches are more obviously and actively on the agenda for other mainstream archival institutions that have in the past had similarly embedded traditional notions of 'archivist as controller'. The question becomes why the discussions in the interviews appear to point to a collective perception in the team that participatory approaches are not yet entirely relevant or pertinent in the context of the Wellcome Library. A cyclical relationship between procedures and dispositions may be a contributing factor as to why it is difficult for 'participatory approaches' to break through, but no cyclical relationship between habitus and field is hermetically sealed or challenge and change to the status quo would remain impossible in all contexts. The team's domains of association stretch beyond their immediate working contexts and they are therefore aware of challenges to traditional notions of the role of archivists as well as related challenges to maintaining professional distinctions that have occurred across the heritage sector in libraries and museums. The team show this awareness of the broader picture throughout the interviews talking about how working with communities has become a zeitgeist within the profession (Archivist 1) and how user participation can be embedded in a number of ways in online archival initiatives (Senior Archivist 1), but these changes within the field (and across the heritage sector) as a whole are seen as somewhat distant:

Anna: Is something like post-custodial models, is that something that is talked about within the team or is it just not within the radar of what you are doing or aiming to do?

Senior Archivist 1: Post-custodial in the sense that we might have the information but not hold the stuff?

Anna: Yes, and in the sense that you might be a facilitator rather than a controller when expertise lies elsewhere.

Senior Archivist 1: We are very aware that all sorts of interactivity is made possible by Web 2.0 which we haven't scratched the surface of here; we are aware of the talk of community archives being kept outside organizational or governmental or

state structures and discussions on what role mainstream institutions may play in relation to these archives[...] but these are not things we explicitly discuss as impacting on strategy here to any great degree at the moment. I think those of us that are involved in the archive training courses probably think about it more[...] So some of us are kept more abreast of what is going on in current archive thinking than others, but it is not something we really discuss as a team.

### Lack of advocacy for the ‘participatory’

The distance that the team maintains in relation to engaging with ‘participatory approaches’ is perhaps perpetuated and maintained by the fact that there is no-one actively advocating for the embrace of ‘participation’; making a case for ways in which it could be embedded into archival practice. Each of the interviewees has developed a unique frame of reference in which they perceive their individual contribution within the team. These frames of reference have arisen from being given responsibility for a particular operational aspect of the archival endeavor, or from a particular specialism that they have evolved during their working trajectory in the department, or from aspects of their roles that they particularly enjoy and gain satisfaction from developing. Here I sense how the ‘collective habitus’ within the team is broken down into individual dispositions each with a central ‘archival’ focus. Each Archivist’s ability to think critically about practice and to be actively engaged in being transformative in their work operates in regard to what is centralized in their role. It becomes difficult for the team members to think beyond the boundaries of these individual frames of reference. Some team members are focused on digital archives and the development of practice for ingesting and managing born-digital records; this then becomes synonymous with what they perceive as their sphere of influence in which they have room to push things forward. This is surfaced in the following discussion:

Anna: I am getting the impression that despite being broadly in favour, participatory approaches isn’t a burning issue for you perhaps?

Archivist 4: Yes I am like other people in the library – I am caught up with what I have got to do – so in my project there are lots of areas where I can think differently about how we archive things – so I am currently puzzling over how we can document tacit knowledge – but embedding participatory projects into our work in a general sense? That is beyond the scope of where I fit in. It is beyond the scope of where I can most effectively generate ideas or think carefully around practice.

This explains why the team can appear to be dynamic and even ‘cutting edge’ in areas that directly intersect with the spheres of interest and influence of the team members.

## The broader organizational ethos and its impact

Some of the team members talk of 'participatory approaches' as representing a complete 'paradigm shift' (Senior Archivist 2) demanding a radical departure from the embedded practices that currently sit around archives. As a department within the Library, the Special Collections team contributes to a transformative agenda but it is one that is set by the overarching Library Strategy, 2009-2014 (WEL1). It would be very difficult (if not impossible) for the team to implement radical shifts in focus or new working practices if those shifts in focus were not clearly embedded in the broader library vision. Opportunities and constraints therefore come from the team's hierarchical positioning in the organizational field. This is illustrated by a consideration of the development of an archival online presence which sits as an embedded part of the Wellcome Library's digital agenda, the focus of which is a push towards large-scale digitization of the Library's holdings (including archives) to provide online content that can be remotely downloaded, saved and reused by library researchers. The Head of the Wellcome Library sums up the focus of the digital agenda within the library in the following terms:

Over the last four years we have recast ourselves from being a primarily physical library to a library that is increasingly equally physical and digital – our services and internal working practices and the content we serve up is seen as being digital and physical without there being a clear dividing line between them and that is a permanent change for us; that won't go away; we won't ever lose our physical collections; it's simply about integrating digital and physical - that was quite satisfying - that was done on the back of a number of smaller experimental projects which had given the confidence to say that is the way forward.

The drive of the digitization programme, and the major internal marker of its success is that of scale: 30 million pages are to be online by 2020. The launch of 'Codebreakers: the makers of modern genetics' in March 2013 represented the first installment of the digitization programme with over a million pages of books and archives relating to the history of genetics (see Chaplin, 2013). The aim has been to digitize as much as possible within individual collections (as opposed to the provision of cherry picked digitized highlights of collections) so that remote access mimics as closely as possible the opportunities presented by physical, onsite access to the same material. Considerable emphasis has been placed on the design of a high quality digital player that can seamlessly deliver the full range of formats represented in the library holdings to the end user. From the outset, the project has not been in any sense driven by a 'participatory'

vision, rather it is the replication of onsite services online that is the underpinning ethos behind the transformation. In interviewing the Head of the Library, the possibility of developing Web 2.0 enabled 'user participation' within the digital library in the form of commenting or uploading of resources was certainly not ruled out, and is still on the agenda of future developments as the digital library builds its user base and understands more about what its users might want from the digital library, but it has not been in any way central to the formation of the digitization agenda:

Anna: So the digital library at the moment has been designed as a one-way exchange, there isn't user commenting or that sort of functionality, is that something that is going to come?

Head of Library: We would have done it but our initial audience research showed that people weren't interested in commenting. It may be because we started from our existing user base. I think there is an iterative processes where you put something up and it gains a new audience and that new audience might be interested in doing something that existing users weren't interested in doing, and therefore you start to change what you do. We always went in to the provision of digital content assuming that it would include provision for social engagement – the Web 2.0 model – if people not contributing the primary content – then at least producing secondary content around it. I think that will be the case in the future but we don't have the right audience for it yet. I think we are better off responding to what an audience wants to do rather than trying to second guess what they might want to do and offering them something that doesn't correspond.

Certainly, in its present incarnation, the discovery layers sitting around 'code breakers' (Wellcome Library, n.d) maintain a firm boundary between repository and user in a one-way model of knowledge exchange. The user has the option of exploring and interacting with content through open catalogue searches or alphabetical subject browsing. Interpretation and communication of a 'story' sitting behind the digitized material is provided through a timeline that communicates the history of genetics from Darwin to the present day in bite-sized chunks of historical information from which the user can jump down to consume the digitized content. Contextualization is also provided didactically through a long article written by the Science writer Georgina Ferry. It is clear that for 'user participation' to become an embedded feature within the digital library; the discovery mechanisms and interpretative layers sitting around the content would need to be fundamentally re-imagined to incorporate a different underpinning ethos; a more open, experiential approach to engagement.

In several interviews, when talking around the digital library and its participatory potential, the interviewees used the development of the Wellcome Library blog and the fact that it is

so 'heavily policed' (Archivist 3) to describe what they perceive to be an organizational reluctance to relinquish control:

We have been very slow as a library to adopt Web 2.0 – I think one of the examples of this is the library blog – we've actually gone backwards in terms of the blog. Previously the blog was managed in the spirit of Web 2.0 in that it was something that any member of library staff could contribute to, whereas now it has to go through a particular department who will edit your post, there are rules about length and number of images and size, and all sorts of things. To me that is counter to the very idea of embracing and using Web 2.0 which is about freedom of expression. If staff aren't even allowed to freely participate what does that say about our attitude to external participation? (laughter) Seriously though, I wonder whether our avoidance to be at the forefront of participatory approaches is to do with the ethos of the Wellcome as an institution and the fact that we are not very good at letting go of our control (Archivist 2).

### Perceptions of social justice

As I have argued in Chapter 2, the concept of 'participatory archiving' extends well beyond the incorporation of Web 2.0 technologies in online archival spaces, and my research interest is focused on participatory initiatives that are connected to notions of social justice, aimed at transforming a perceived marginalization, giving a voice to the excluded, and giving archival control over to the marginalized. During the interviews, I was seeking then to gain a sense of staff perceptions around participatory frameworks that are specifically motivated from these starting points and framed in these terms. Fundamentally, I was keen to ascertain the extent to which social justice was on the agenda as a motivation or justification for action within the team, particularly in relation to collection development. I came across two different viewpoints: the first was that social justice was not used as a basis for decision-making and action around collecting:

Anna: Is social justice ever discussed at all within the team? Looking at what you do in terms of here are the gaps, the silences, the marginalizations and framing it as a social responsibility or a moral obligation to do something about it. Is that ever mentioned in any context within the archive team?

Archivist 1: (laughter) Not in our meetings! I know that people feel very strongly about these issues in their personal lives and are very politically active and aware to varying degrees, but no, actually no, we don't ever talk about the archive in those terms. Thinking about it, it's very surprising that we don't talk in those terms. I know there are members of the team with very strong personal political views that chime with a social justice agenda, strong views about what is fair and not fair, and yet I have never heard those people use that as a reason for going after a particular collection or theme. We haven't used it to inform our collecting at all I would say.

Another interviewee argues that the team are looking to reflect multiple perspectives in what they collect but this is not motivated by a social justice agenda, it is motivated from wanting as complete a documentary record as possible:

We don't use social justice to decide what to collect. Not in those terms, although perhaps there is something getting towards that direction. For every collection we would justify it – anti-establishment, counter culture, controversial, it went against received medical thinking in this area – but not using those terms – if it is happening it is happening unconsciously rather than a conscious case being made [...]It's about getting a more complete documentary record rather than anything else (Archivist 4).

However, for at least one member of the team, social justice has always underpinned the team's decisions on what to collect:

Yes it's a motivating factor. We do discuss areas of marginalization and attempts to redress that on a pretty regular basis – the issue of the patient voice has been there all the time. Even in the early gentlemen's club days there was still discussion going on there about how we capture patient perspectives [...]There is a general awareness that the collection passed to us by Henry Wellcome focused very much on the great men of medicine and one needed to widen it out to a wider range of medical practitioners – as a mainly female working group we come to it from a feminist standpoint that it is precisely the great 'men' of medicine that needs challenging...We would all be living under a stone if we weren't aware of how British history has been the history of the white establishment. We do talk in terms of marginalized groups requiring more representation. There have been quite a few self organized patient or lobby group organizations that we have taken on in the past to redress imbalance – the Thalidomide Society is one recent example [...]There is definitely a commitment to ensure that we don't document just one, narrow, approved view of history – we look beyond the boundaries of the white, male, top-down historical paradigm. However, that co-exists with that sense of ourselves as the gatekeepers of history - we will decide what survives and what doesn't. Nobody says human beings must be 100% rational or consistent (Senior Archivist 2).

At this point, I have no clear answers as to why there is this variation in individual perceptions around 'social justice' as a motivator in collecting, but I sense that those who do not position the department's collecting in relation to social justice may be pointing to a fundamental difference between seeking to address collection gaps to directly benefit the marginalized (which would fit more explicitly within a social justice framework) and seeking to address collection gaps to benefit present and future research audiences who will benefit from having a more complete documentary record. The team's perceptions around audiences will now be explored in the next section as I believe it is in these notions that

organizational barriers to 'participatory approaches' that is motivated from seeking transformation *for* the marginalized (social justice) can be located.

## Perceptions around audience and stakeholders

So one of the strengths of the Wellcome Trust is that we are independent, but that independence can then become a problem because we don't have a natural constituency to whom we owe any responsibility. We have to artificially create that responsibility to others to get that same kind of interaction going (Head of Wellcome Library).

This remark from the Head of the Wellcome Library drives at the heart of the difficulty in establishing the range of stakeholders to which the organization seeks to benefit through its collecting activities and provision of public services. Who does the Wellcome Library seek to benefit? Who is it serving?

When asked the direct question 'who does Special Collections collect for?' team members frequently returned to the familiar archival response that archivists should avoid clouding their judgment with notions of collecting for a 'body' because archivists collect with an eye on the future 'for all the potentials, unimagined, as yet' (Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections) who will interact with the collections in decades to come in ways that cannot be perceived or quantified in the here and now. Despite this caveat, the team do conceptualize audiences that they are there to serve. They talk about the Library as being in a place of transition in relation to its audiences, with an increased focus on the ordinary member of the public encapsulated in the notion of the curious public. However, it is 'academic researchers' that are conceptualized by the team as being the core around which the library, its collections, and its services are primarily orientated:

We probably still have the core academic discipline of the history of medicine at our centre. It's probably a series of concentric circles really. I would imagine that the library's collecting policy has that at its heart. Beyond that we would probably look at academic study, that is the main driver, so we are looking at historians of medicine and beyond that historians of other stuff. Beyond that academic disciplines other than history, certainly in art. Art students, anthropologists and so forth. Beyond that probably the curious public as a whole (Senior Archivist 1).

The Library has had a strong historical association with academic research reflected in its former position as part of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine. Throughout the history of the Wellcome Museum and Library it is possible to trace many ways in which



the staff established and maintained links with established academic bodies. In 1968, the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum and Library was renamed as the Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine sharing its building with a newly established (in 1966) sub-department of the History of Medicine within the Department of Anatomy at University College London (UCL) which remained part of the Institute for the first two years. This was the direct result of the Wellcome Trustees turning their attention to the establishment of the history of medicine as an academic discipline within the British university system as had long been the case in continental Europe and America. By the early 1970s, the Institute had established itself as a centre for scholarly research based primarily on the Library. The close integration between academically orientated staff and library staff is evidenced at this time through the diploma in the history of medicine which was taught by both academic and library staff at the Institute. This integrative relationship between the library and scholarly research was so successful that when the Trustees became worried that the costs associated with maintaining the Institute's activities were compromising the Trust's responsibilities to fund medical research, it was decided that the Institute should focus on the library and research aspects, and that the necessary cut backs would be best absorbed through the transfer of the museum to a national museum. The Institute was then further developed as a centre for research at postgraduate level associated with the University of London. By 1974 the academic life of the Institute was focused around the activities of a core group of young scholars attached as research fellows working in co-operation with the UCL sub-department then headed by Dr Bynum. In 1976 a scheme of association between the Institute and UCL regularized the Institute's teaching and research activities with academic staff of the Institute becoming honorary lecturers at UCL forming a joint academic unit with Dr Bynum and his staff. This provided a formal basis for the attachment of graduate students to the Institute, and a one year undergraduate course in the history of medicine for pre-clinical medical students was instituted as part of the College's intercalated BSc programme. A new team of scholars began to be recruited and an academic programme of lectures, seminars and symposia was gradually developed. In 1979 the Contemporary Medical Archives Centre was established to collect the papers of twentieth century British medical practitioners, scientists and institutions and in 1983 the appointment of a Curator of Western Manuscripts made a coordinated approach towards pre-twentieth century manuscript material (Symons, 1993, p.59). One long-standing member of staff described the legacy of these deeply ingrained links to academia in the following terms:

When I arrived there were certain people who were within the charmed circle. This is possibly to do with having the Wellcome's 'Institute of Medical History' banner. We had academics onsite. They were our pet audience if you like and we served them and people who looked liked them, and we didn't need to go out in search of an audience because we had one built-in on the fifth floor (Senior Archivist 1).

When asked, the Head of Special Collections summarized the historical link and its ramifications on collecting habits in the following terms:

Anna: Do you think that [perception of audience shaping collection decisions] has changed over time? Can you say something about how it has evolved?

Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections: So the library used to be part of the Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine, which also had a group of academic researchers embedded in the Institute, and it was explicit that the library was there to serve an academic historical research community - both the people in the building and other Trust funded researchers elsewhere - so it was explicit that what the library was doing was supporting current and future academic research. That was where the library came from, so research potential has been a fundamental driver in activities like collecting.

A landmark in the expansion of the library's scope to consider the public as well as researchers came in 1998 when the Library became part of a new medicine, science and history division. The Trust's information service became embedded within the library and consequently the latter's remit expanded to include increasing public understanding of science. The Institute was disbanded in 1999 and the academic unit was transferred to University College London. At this time, in recognition that the library now had a wider remit than the history of medicine it was renamed in 1999 as the Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine. The embedding of this broader remit was deepened in 2004 when the Library became part of the newly conceived Wellcome Collection which seeks to explore the connections between medicine, life and art in the past, present and future inviting the public to be 'incurably curious' (Wellcome Library, 2013a). For the interviewees it is the integration of the library within Wellcome Collection that marks a turning point in seeking opportunities to consider the public as a key audience:

When we moved from being part of the Wellcome Institute to looking more to Wellcome Collection there was an enormous change in terms of public engagement. Before we would have been marketing our collections solely at an academic audience, or almost entirely at an academic audience, then late 90s early 2000s there was a transition to thinking about your expert hobbyist and we thought that was pretty radical! More recently it has been important to try and attract some of the same audience who come to Wellcome Collection in terms of

talks that we offer and engagement activities of different sorts – events, discussions, debates (Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections).

To label the type of people that the library now seeks to engage with in its new setting within the library, the term ‘curious public’ has emerged as short hand to describe these new types of users that the library now has a commitment to seeking to engage. The interviewees remain ambivalent about the term itself, seeing it as not a particularly meaningful descriptor for conveying who this new audience is:

I think the curious public just means any old person in the street who goes ‘ooooo I wonder what that’s about’. I am a bit of a cynic. Oh dear, the curious public. I don’t really like the term. I do literally think it is just people who express a fleeting interest (Archivist 3).

For others, the term masks some of the fundamental assumptions that lie behind the question of exactly who the Wellcome is aiming to engage with; that far from being ‘anybody’; the Wellcome is seeking to reach an exclusive section of the ‘public’ transposing the Trust mantra of supporting ‘the brightest minds’ into its reach towards lay audiences:

People always talk about the massive public reach of Wellcome Collection. I haven’t seen the latest audience statistics but you can tell the sort of people are all middle class, well educated - we reach a big audience, but it’s not a very inclusive audience (Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections).

Another interviewee develops a similar argument:

In terms of the Wellcome Collection’s curious public – their idea is a very media savvy, young demographic of people who like to engage with ideas and like to know stuff – people that like to be seen as part of this intellectual economy – there is a lot of going to events, socializing and networking at events, plus hopefully they learn some fun stuff along the way, and have an enjoyable time. The Wellcome Collection are clear about what their demographic is. When the youth programme was being mooted before it started there was a decision that it was going to be a ‘boutique’ offering. It was going to be offered to school groups who were relatively high achieving. Now that may have transposed into something different in reality but the point is that it is always the starting position - this idea of wanting to serve the already educated, highly motivated, engaged individual. That is what threads through our public offer (Archivist 1).

In planning for the development of the digital library, a series of stakeholder interviews was conducted by a consultancy firm with a cross-section of Wellcome staff with a ‘stake’ in the planning process. The resulting report suggests that the emerging view on how the

'curious public' can be summed up is that they are 'people who would visit the Tate Modern, the V&A, read Wired Magazine or watch QI' (WEL2) which ties in with the emergent categories used by the Special Collections team:

I think we tend to look a bit older, not children, as that is done by the education team. We are probably thinking more middle class, affluent people. I would say it is not an exclusion, but it is an assumption that those are the type of people who are more likely to be interested. You can't just have any idiot wandering in. I think it is supposed to be an all encompassing thing. I don't know (Archivist 4).

At the Wellcome Library there are two types of stakeholder who emerge as central to the organizational vision. The first is the 'researcher' broadly conceived as the 'academic' and the second is the educated, engaged, networked, motivated member of the public summed up by the descriptor 'curious public'. I would argue then that it is the exclusive (and in many ways elitist) boundaries that sit around the two central stakeholders that constrains the emergence of a rhetoric around 'social inclusion' or 'social justice' as a genuine motivator for practice. Arguing for practice to develop in these terms will only have currency in relation to how that practice benefits the interests of the core audiences meaning that it is perhaps never really possible for it to develop as 'social justice' at all. This was located for me by Jenny Haynes who (when asked how inclusive the library might be to individuals with lived experience of mental health, who might want to define and represent themselves in Wellcome Library collection development plans, events, and debates) helped to join the dots for me by replying:

Well absolutely we could and would include them, I think, in terms of events and debates. I think we would be able to make the case. I think if it still seemed to meet the overall strategic aims of the library and you could say 'right the best group of people to do this is this group over here' I think you could bring them in. But what is interesting is not the agency doing the interpretation, it is the audience that the interpretation is aimed at. That is what is of interest here. So if we were promoting the collections to the audiences that the library wanted them to be promoted to it wouldn't matter who was doing the interpretation as long as the *audience* was felt to be strategically important. I think audience is perhaps the way to look at it. So if we felt the best way to promote a collection was to have a debate between somebody with lived experience of whatever it was and a historian on that condition, on an equal power footing, then that would be absolutely fine because it's of interest for that to happen for our core audiences.

In many ways, the exclusivity sitting around these definitions of audience puts the library somewhat out of step with trends across museums, libraries and archives who over the last 15 years have been increasingly challenged to embed social inclusion at the heart of service mission.

Intellectual and historical discourses that embed social responsibility into the role of the cultural institution have a long and complex lineage (Mason, 2004, p.54) but an examination of United Kingdom Government discourse over the past fifteen years indicates that New Labour's election in 1997 brought about a paradigmatic shift in policy and discourse from the trajectory that had been put in place by the previous Conservative Government in relation to how cultural institutions should frame themselves and their actions within society. New Labour's general position on social inclusion and specific ideology on the role of culture in building a socially inclusive society represented a stark contrast to the ideologies that had been taking shape during the preceding four successive terms of Conservative administration. Writing from a museums perspective on the issue of social exclusion, Sandell (1998) draws on Walker et al (1997) to argue that the Conservatives in their eighteen years of power consistently pursued a 'strategy of inequality' through their politics that served to widen divisions in society. During the time of their government 'inequality was no longer viewed as a potential threat to social fabric but was viewed as an "engine of enterprise", providing incentives for those at the bottom as well as those at the top' (Walker, 1997, p.2-9 in Sandell, 1998, p. 402). In relation to the cultural sector, the Conservatives exerted stronger pressure on cultural institutions to be accountable for their spending while introducing funding cuts. Cultural institutions were encouraged to respond by finding ways to be entrepreneurial and were obliged to embrace plural funding streams. New private partnerships became accepted ways to generate income driven by a need to ensure better management of what was becoming increasingly scarce in terms of central resources (MacDonald, 2002). The economic squeeze was accompanied by a rhetoric of performance management and cultural consumerism that framed visitors as customers (MacDonald, 2002). Governmental policy and rhetoric impacted in the form of an emergent philosophy *within* the sector that framed success in terms of quantities of visitors rather than visitor composition with impact being measured in economic rather than social terms (McLean, 1997 in Sandwell, 1998). The election of New Labour represented a turning of the tide in (re)-establishing social exclusion as a central frame within Government policy. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport translated the outputs of the Government's central Social Exclusion Unit into guidance for the sector that explicitly set new expectations affirming the centrality of the notion of social responsibility for museums, archives and libraries and the proactive role that the sector needs to play in tackling social exclusion (DCMS, 2000, DCMS, 2001). Libraries, archives and museums were being asked to reinvent themselves as agents of inclusion, tackling issues relating to deprivation and disadvantage whilst reaching the widest possible

audience, enabling those on the edges of society to be active not just as cultural consumers but also as producers. New Labour's drive on social inclusion has inevitably left a sediment on the collective dispositions of practitioners *within* the cultural heritage sector; and our 'feel for the game' has been shaped by the recent history of the political field in which we have been situated. As a sector we have been encouraged to envision ourselves as transformative agents of social change and even with the re-election of the Conservatives in 2010 this social framing of our role persists as part of the repertoire in which we can position ourselves in the new political climate and from which we can continue to find ways to legitimate our actions.

During their time in power, New Labour increasingly found ways to integrate the availability of economic capital for the public cultural sector to the tackling of specific governmental goals such as social inclusion (Mason, 2004, p.64). Social inclusion became a form of social capital that would be exchanged for economic capital. This exchange between the social inclusion capital that an organization can generate and economic investment also lies at the heart of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) which has been the major funder for specialist projects within our sector since its inception in 1994. A 2004 consultative report produced for the HLF reviewing its impact on the heritage sector claims that the £3 billion that the HLF had committed from the National Lottery for 15,000 awards 'transformed the landscape of heritage in the United Kingdom' both materially and conceptually, shifting the idea of the value and importance of heritage away from being 'something that is exclusively determined by experts on behalf of society, to one that recognizes the importance of widespread participation in identifying and caring for what is valued collectively' promoting and enabling a 'diversity of contributions to the national story' (Demos, 2004). The influence of New Labour over the Heritage Lottery took the form of new policy directives issued in 1998 which broadened the conceptualization of the fund's role beyond addressing issues of importance to the national heritage to include:

- The scope for reducing economic and social deprivation at the same time as creating heritage benefits.
- The need to promote access, for people from all sections of society, to heritage objects and collections.
- The need to promote knowledge of and interest in the heritage by children and young people.
- The need to further the objectives of sustainable development (Demos, 2014, p.16).

The legal requirement on the HLF to act on these directives means that the imperative to align heritage activity with a reduction in social deprivation has filtered down into the construction of HLF funding streams and into the application and evaluation processes sitting underneath these streams. The impact on the sector then has been substantial- to receive economic investment from the HLF- public museums, libraries and archives have to conceptualize their heritage activities as mechanisms for tackling social exclusion (Demos, 2009, p.17-18).

This embedding of the social inclusion agenda has also come from within the local authority structures that many museums, archives and libraries sit within. Services must increasingly align themselves with community cohesion agendas so it has been progressively more difficult for public sector archives, libraries and museums to construct their aims, missions and activities outside of a social inclusion framework, although the extent to which this shift in agenda has resulted in real social transformations is debatable. The conceptualization of what 'should' lie at the heart of the sector's mission has been fundamentally shaken and challenged. Increasingly, public sector museums, libraries and archives have had to use the rhetoric of 'social inclusion' 'diversity' and 'involvement' to frame aims, services and activities. As the professional fields of libraries, museums and archives in the United Kingdom is itself dominated by the public sector; the collective professional habitus has inevitably developed in relation to this shift with the social aspects of our role becoming increasingly visible and debated.<sup>12</sup>

The Wellcome Library has been insulated from directly transforming organizational practice in the light of the social inclusion agenda precisely because of the independent

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<sup>12</sup> The extent to which the social inclusion agenda has remained a powerful driver of field and habitus since the Conservative return to power in 2010 is an issue for debate. Its embedding in the Heritage Lottery Fund's vision and rhetoric has arguably sustained its relevance as a form of ensuring it remains a salient concept that drives practice within our sector. Yet alongside this, there has perhaps been a gradual erosion of the core principles within the social inclusion agenda, as notions of inclusion have become conflated with the concept of volunteering, embedded in Conservative visions of the 'Big Society'. Further to this, the economic downturn and the severe cuts to publically funded archive services occurring over the last five years has inevitably meant that local authority services in particular are finding it increasingly difficult to do anything more than fight for the existence of minimal services. Our collective discourses have arguably shifted focus away from inclusion more resolutely onto a rhetoric connected with survival. Nevertheless, I would suggest that social inclusion remains salient in our collective consciousness, even if it has somewhat lost its momentum. It still has currency as a concept that shapes our collective disposition, but is no longer the key driver that it was under New Labour.

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
status of the Wellcome Trust. The Wellcome is not a publically funded institution and it can therefore distance itself from how heritage and culture is being constructed from within the Governmental field. The Wellcome Library simply has not had the same direct imperative to embed social inclusion at the heart of its aims as its public sector counter-parts have had.

A return to an examination of the primary audiences for the Wellcome Library is important here, because although the Wellcome Library may be insulated from being influenced by Governmental discourse and policy around social inclusion the same cannot be said for academic discourse and practice sitting around these concepts. The academic audience that the Wellcome Library is primarily orientated to serve also has a dialogical relationship to the construction of social justice agendas which over time has shaped what has been demanded from the Wellcome Library and at times brings the library close to 'appearing' to operate within a more socially inclusive framework. Narrowing the frame to a consideration of the historical field, it is perhaps the rise of social history in the 1970s and 1980s which focused attention away from top-down historical narratives to 'history from below' (see Flinn and Sexton, 2013, p.3-4) that has ensured that efforts have been, and continue to be, made to incorporate perspectives from below or at the margins into the historical records held by the Wellcome Library. Without these records, the Library cannot stay in touch with the paradigm shift that has occurred within the historical field and the broader humanities field that has been part of shifting perspectives on the value inherent in these histories. The Wellcome Library has therefore maintained a 'third party' relationship to the shift towards broader representation that have arisen from within the historical and humanities fields. Although the *records* of the previously marginalized have been increasingly sought out and collected, this is motivated by the requirement to respond to the needs of the 'academic researcher', therefore, the marginalized have not necessarily been welcomed in alongside to become a stakeholder and an audience in their own right. In this way the Wellcome Library serves the needs of its key audience through broader representation within its collections but remains somewhat distanced with the underpinning politics of representation as *transformation* for those that have been previously marginalized.



## Neutrality as a potential barrier to enacting social justice

However, to suggest that the Wellcome Library only remains detached from the political struggles of the deprived and marginalized because its gaze is fixed so resolutely on the 'academic researcher' would not capture the complexity of the issue, nor does it do justice to what is at stake in turning the gaze towards the political agendas of the oppressed.

For me, one of the issues we would need to consider is what are the potential other uses of collections created through participatory exercises because they can have a range of uses, some of which fit very happily with what the Wellcome Trust do as an organization, others which might sit less comfortably. So the use of collections as political tools, that is not something we should be scared of, but it is something we need to be aware of (Head of Wellcome Library).

The distancing of the Wellcome Library from the politics of representation echoes through this statement made by the Head of the Wellcome Library and through the interviews with the staff in general. Only one of the interviewees described the Wellcome Trust as a politically neutral organization; all the other interviewees are aware that 'nothing is neutral' (Senior Archivist 2) and the Trust plays an overtly political game in and through its stances on ethics and research in the fields of science, health and medicine:

We are not neutral; we are a scientific research institution and we have strong policies on things like animal research, and on patient data, and on the use of genetic data that not everyone agrees with. And its not a trivial thing to say to an anti-abortion agency or anti-vivisection group, give us your archive because we feel you are under represented (Head of Wellcome Library).

In describing the political position of the Library in relation to collecting, the interviewees universally suggest that neutrality is the most ethical (and in fact the only practical) stance for the Library to take. The team *are* committed to addressing gaps, silences and marginalizations because they seek to reflect a diverse documentary landscape in relation to health and medicine (bearing in mind their position in relation to other collectors). However, there is a complex tension that arises because rich, multiple and diverse representation can only be achieved under the guise of neutrality. Maintaining a degree of distance and objectivity from the political positioning of donors and their collections is seen as essential because multiple and incommensurable perspectives can only co-exist if the host claims an impartial perspective that is open to all and favours none. A neutral stance is therefore necessary to negate the difficulties of negotiating conflicts of interest:

Well this is a very difficult area. We know we are not passive in our decisions to take in collections; we are actively shaping history in our collecting decisions. Archiving is politically charged. Yet if we want to do our job in representing as diversely as we can then we have to avoid what I would call getting embroiled in micro-politics. We cannot possibly align ourselves too closely to the individual, group or organizational perspectives of our depositors. That is for all sorts of reasons, we would alienate others if we were seen as too closely aligned with one particular group, we could compromise the Trust if we became politically engaged. In theory all our depositors could start demanding our political support and we couldn't possibly give it both in practical and ethical terms. So although we know we are not neutral, the concept of neutrality remains useful (Archivist 2).

This surfacing by Archivist 2 of the impossibility of the archivist's neutrality, alongside a recognition of the utility (or even necessity) of enacting the concept of neutrality when dealing with multiple depositors points to a major tension that sits at the core of the question of whether it is possible for collecting institutions like the Wellcome to embrace social justice as an overarching framework in which to fulfill their archival mission. It is a tension that is troubled by the notion that the concepts of neutrality, objectivity and distance can be a particular stumbling block when seeking to establish relationships with marginalized communities where trust building and gaining legitimacy is perhaps achieved most effectively through 'deep engagement'. This tension will be returned to and explored again in more depth in Chapter 10.

### The drivers underpinning collecting

Given the acknowledgement by the interviewees that archiving is always politically charged it is worth looking at what emerges from the interviews in relation to the political landscape in which the Wellcome Library's Special Collections are actively and deliberately shaped; to crystalize the ways in which neutrality is a guise rather than a reality.

In line with the current Library Strategy (2013c), since 2010, Special Collections has been developing its collections through its targeted collecting policy. This draws on the Trust's five challenge areas as collecting themes. The five areas are:

- Maximizing the health benefits of genetics and genomics
- Understanding the brain
- Combating infectious disease
- Investigating development, ageing and chronic disease

- Connecting environment, nutrition and health

The purposes of the targeted collecting strategy is openly acknowledged by the team to be a strategic and political statement aimed at the Trust, to illustrate the alignment between the Library and the Trust's organizational aims:

Anna: Targeted collecting. Can you describe to me what it is?

Head of Special Collections: ...We are funded by the Wellcome Trust. One in seven people in this building work in the library so we absolutely have to communicate that we are serving the greater strategic objectives of the Trust. There are subtle ways in which we do that but there is one way in which we have decided very overtly to align ourselves. The Trust has five strategic challenge areas [...] We foreground our contribution in those five strategic areas by saying completely clearly that we are shaping our collections around those five challenge areas.

This alignment of the Library's collecting practice under the Trust's challenge areas, can be read as an example of Boudieu's concept of symbolic capital at work. The Library's is aware of what themes hold value for the Trust. It is hoped that the alignment of collecting practice with the themes the trust has outlined as fundamental to its mission, will gain symbolic capital for the Library, and that gaining this symbolic capital will offset the economic investment made by the Trust in its support of the Library. In practical terms, the implementation of targeted collecting is slowly shifting the shape of the collection towards an alignment with areas of research interest within the Wellcome Trust itself. The interviewees most frequently use the example of tying in with the Trust's challenge area around 'maximising the health benefits of genetics and genomics' and the work the Human Genome Project archivist is doing to actively document in this area:

So the rise in genetic medicine is something that wasn't well documented in the collections. Obviously in the future people are going to be really interested in this massive revolution that we are in the midst of at the moment. So it has concentrated our minds and we have started to bring in more material in those areas. So in fact we are using it as an opportunity to start to collect a little more broadly (Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections).

When asked to delve deeper into how material is sought out proactively by the team to cover the challenge areas, covering the 'big story' emerges as the pragmatic basis around which clusters of collections are sought out around a theme:

Anna: Ok so from what you are saying, targeted collecting is taking you away from collecting decisions being motivated by the needs of a preconceived or already existing audience towards something else. It is offering you another way of defining

what is important and therefore what you should be actively collecting. But what is it that now defines what is important within targeted collecting? If it's not who is going to use it what is it?

Archivist 4: We are looking to document the significant events within each theme [...]those big points on the chart that represent major shifts. That is how I see it. We are going for collections or groups of collections that represent those major shifts. We are talking about documenting impact.

The challenge areas are the frame of reference that mark the boundaries of the terrain in which marginalizations and gaps are then identified. Over time, this focus on alignment with the Trust's challenges carries the potential that the collections will be moulded into a Trust approved view on health and medicine. The accompanying tendency to look to document 'large scale impact' further shapes the trajectory of the story that the collections can tell. However, suggesting that there is a 1:1 correlation between targeted collecting policy and what is sought out is too simplistic. The team speak of the targeted collecting strategy as a 'yardstick' and an open guide rather than an overly prescriptive tool. Respecting and building on existing collecting strengths is also carried out tangentially to the targeted collecting strategy:

Anna: Just thinking about this move to align collecting with the Trust. Are you completely comfortable with that?

Senior Archivist 1: I think there is always the possibility that what is currently occupying the Trust's mind is swayed by 'fashion'. I am making the inverted commas gesture at this point because I can't think of a better word for it right now, and that makes it sound a little more pejorative than I mean it to. I think what I am working my way round to saying [pause] is that I am realizing there is a constant balance between the targeted collecting that reflects the Trust's current priorities and the existing strengths in the collection. One of our classic justifications for getting something that is not within the challenge areas is 'but it does build on an existing collecting strength?' So we are balancing the two always. Building on existing collection strengths is a justification in itself, it's not that we reserve the right to collect outside of the collecting areas just because we fancy it. Building on existing collection strengths means building on existing readership - if it's a strong part of the collection it means we have a core audience already coming to view the collection so we have a reason to acquire it to benefit that established audience.

The combination of the focus on challenge areas and existing collection strengths brings about two important outcomes. The first is that the existing readership is still catered for, their research interests still sit in dialogical relationship to the Library's collecting through the building up of existing collection strengths. The second is there is a basis around which collecting can be expanded into new areas in a way that aligns with and compliments the

institutional objectives of the Trust itself. However, what this inevitably means is that collecting around marginalizations and gaps that aren't easily and readily identifiable in terms of the Trust's challenge areas becomes difficult (or perhaps impossible) to justify; the language of significance and value is now tied down. This means that small collections on the borders of the challenge areas may be taken under the radar but large collections requiring significant investment must measure up along the lines that have now been explicitly drawn to secure investment.

### Recognition of internal dichotomies

The importance of the broader institutional context that the Library sits within and the influence of the politics and culture embedded across the Wellcome Trust cannot be understated. The Wellcome Trust is a funding institution that supports a range of research activities across the fields of health, science, and medicine. The scope of what the Trust is interested in supporting is not restricted to a narrow conceptualization of biomedical science research, their funding streams also specifically encompass public engagement as well as research that is more embedded within the medical humanities, and explorations around society and ethics. This means that many of the programs and projects that the Trust supports intersect with the interests of the Wellcome Library in enabling the public to engage with the history of health and medicine. However, in reality this means that adventurous engagement projects happen at a distance, as work the Trust funds, rather than as core activities that the Trust directly undertakes:

There is an absolute dichotomy between the culture inherent within directly funded activities and the grant holding activities. I think it's because there is no real risk with a lot of the grants. The biggest risk is that someone might waste a bit of the Trust's money but the grants are there to take risks. Interestingly, with the new director of the Trust, one of the first things he said was 'we don't take enough risks with what we do'. I think we will be challenged to take more risks and do things differently and that might create a culture in which a project like yours is more likely to have legs (Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections).

This inside-outside dichotomy is where my own PhD research and participatory approach is situated as both internal to but at a distance from the core activities of the Special Collections team. In many ways this distancing acts a potential block to the possibility that project's like mine might make an impact or difference to transforming and influencing core established practice.

### The 'truth' in the emerging picture?

The picture emerging from my analysis of these interviews seeks to paint a picture of the localized context within which the Special Collections team operates and the ways in which the specificities of habitus, field and capital in that setting combine to create boundaries around the possible embrace of participatory approaches in this localized institutional context. It has felt important to explore this as the context that the archive of mental health recovery stories sits within, and is in dialogue with. However, I am troubled by my emergent representation, and question the extent to which it is a fair, accurate, and truthful insight into the Special Collections team, their views, stance, and practice in relation to participation. This representation surfaces quite a significant and extensive feeling of *negativity* towards participation, but the surfacing of this negativity needs to be understood in the context of the inherent *positivity* I have sensed emanating from the team in relation to the trajectory of my research and its focus on exploring participatory processes. From the outset, in my interactions outside of the interviews, the team have consistently given me the sense that they feel my research is valid, important, useful, and worth exploring and this is in and of itself indicative of an open embrace to the possibilities inherent in participation. This has particularly been the case with Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections, who has been unreservedly supportive and encouraging of my focus on participation, indicating from the outset that this is an area in which she sees potential and possibilities. There is then a degree of dissonance between what emerged through the interviews, and what I know of the team from spending time with them, and the many and varied ways in which my research has been optimistically received. This brings me to invite the reader to read the negativity that emanated from the interviews as inextricably linked into the team's collective willingness to plunge into the depths with me and trouble the deep contradictions they experience in approaching the possibilities of participation, that contradiction of being somewhat open and somewhat closed at the same time, the move towards a hospitable embrace of participation balanced against the dissonant elements of the archival disposition and the nature of the field that counter (or at least constrain) the possibility of that commitment in different ways, and get in the way of a straightforward take up of the tenets of participatory approaches. This is not a team that is stuck in a blinded, unprogressive, rigid position on participation. It is a team that, at the time of the interviews, was in the process of becoming *actively* engaged

in the questions that sit around participation, and were as committed as I was to probing into the complexity of their stance on participatory approaches in relation to their situated position in the field. I also recognize a close proximity and overlap between our respective stances: my questions, my contradictions, my dissonances in seeking to adopt a participatory approach resonate with theirs. I am myself simultaneously invested within aspects of the 'archival habitus' surfaced here, and what will become clear as the chapters unfold is the extent to which many of the tensions around 'participatory practice' that emerge for the Special Collections team, in fact speak directly back into my own enactment of a participatory intervention in the building of the archive of mental health recovery stories. This chapter is a marker, placed here as scene setting, as the context in which this research is embedded, but it is not the end of what will be said about the Special Collections team in relation to participatory approaches. Chapter 10 picks up on these strands and surfaces the dynamic shifts in habitus and field that have occurred at the Wellcome as this research has progressed, illustrating the degree to which stances, attitudes, dispositions and practice in relation to participation are always dynamically unfolding; moving the team into a new space with offers a different horizon, a range of new avenues, and participatory possibilities. When this is coupled with an exploration of my own shifting perspectives and understandings of the key concepts underpinning this research, a very different reading begins to emerge.

## Chapter 6: Finding My Voice

### Starting with 'I'

Centralizing myself within my research is a decision that has been embedded from the very earliest stages of this PhD through my embrace of Schon's (1991) notions of the 'reflective practitioner', and the coupling of reflection and action in my chosen 'action research' framework. In the chapters that I have presented so far, I am present and visible to the reader as I have taken you through my negotiations with the literature, and my positioning to the views on participation embedded in the institutional context in which my research is embedded. The reader has been provided with a window into my thought processes and developmental learning, but my adopted voice and tone has been somewhat dispassionate and emotionless. I aspire to present a calm, measured, reflective, rational individual. I have chosen to keep that voice for the first half of this thesis because it speaks directly into where I was at in the early stages of my research before I entered into the practical phase associated with constructing the archive of mental health recovery stories. When contained within the abstract world of research, the iterative cycles of planning, acting and reflecting were neat and contained and easy to traverse. I was on a journey of self-discovery in which there was a forward motion of progression. I was moving away from fuzzy and ungraspable understandings of being 'participatory', towards a clarity of understanding. I could be measured, calm and rational about the process. As I have entered into the practical aspects of the research, *living* the participatory process with Dolly, Andrew, Peter and Stuart, those neat iterations of planning, action, reflection and a resulting forward motion towards understanding and away from uncertainty have collapsed inwards. The chaos, mess and complexity of 'doing' rather than just 'thinking about' participatory approaches has, in itself, demanded that I find a different voice in which to speak about the process, a voice that gives space to those frequent moments of 'not knowing' and of moving backwards rather than forwards in my understanding. I would dare to suggest that these are the moments where my irrationality (when I have found it impossible to think clearly, impossible to find a sound basis for interpretation, and impossible to reach a definitive sound judgment on my actions or the way ahead) needs to be allowed in and not tucked away and shut out in the folds of academic representation. I want to find a voice that resists cutting irrationality out as rationality's profane opposite. My irrational moments are moments to be explored as fruitful spaces for knowledge production.



Whilst living the process, my journal was my space for confronting and dealing with the complexity of *living* the participatory process. It was an outpouring of my personal response to the research: the circular questions I have faced; the issues I have struggled to resolve; the times where I have felt excited, motivated, transformed, uncomfortable, frustrated and anxious within the making of the archive of mental health recovery stories. However, the extent to which I would carry this personal struggle out of my journals and into my final writing up remained for a long time as an open question and as a stumbling block. For six months following the completion of the archive of mental health recovery stories I was unable to write up the core of my research because I could not decide on the extent to which I should embody my personal experience in my formal thesis. Is it legitimate to write in an intensely personal way within an academic framework? Do I want to put myself through that level of scrutiny? To take what has been personal and expose it to the academic gaze? Can I write more convincingly about the process with or without it? If I make the leap- how do I get the balance right between revealing too much and too little?

Feminists, amongst others, have been vocal in asserting that the 'personal is political' (Bannerji et al, 1991, p.11), and have sought legitimacy for emotionally infused and embodied research that embraces and draws in aspects of the researcher's subjectivity. It is therefore possible to draw on a number of threads of feminist discourse in order to make the case as to why aspects of personhood that are normatively labeled as 'personal', and therefore irrelevant to the process of academic knowledge production, should be allowed to seep into academic discourse (Rockhill, 1987; Bowles & Gintis, 1987; McKenna, 1997). In eras where positivism was dominant in academic settings the 'personal' can be interpreted as what Foucault refers to as a 'subjugated form of knowledge', located 'low down on the hierarchy' far enough away from mainstream academic knowledge production that its validity is 'not dependent on the approval of established regimes of thought' (Foucault, 1972, p.81-82). Yet the fight to legitimate and validate the 'personal', and the ensuing arguments around the extent to which the personal has a place in academic discourse, are far from settled. The opening up of the question 'what counts as knowledge?' is fraught with tension and dispute (Bannerji et al, 1997, p.23). In feminist discourse, the wave of enthusiasm in the 1980s and 1990s for ushering in the 'personal' was almost immediately troubled and questioned, not just from outside but from within feminist discourse itself (Goodson, 1994, 1997). The degree to which academics can be personal within their research and teaching is still

Rockhill (1987) typifies the articulated argument for the legitimation of 'personal' and 'embodied' research within academic frameworks. She speaks of the chaos of subjectivity, and the splitting she continuously experienced between her sense of self and what was demanded of her in an academic world. Her argument is for speaking from the heart, and the body, as well as the mind. It is premised on a desire to break out from the academic straightjacket- to embrace the 'inappropriate, anecdotal, emotional, and personal'. To embrace self-disclosure that borders on 'egocentrism and narcissism', and to even dare to speak from the chaos within, from places that are 'non-analytical, fuzzy, unclear, and confusing'. This, according to Rockhill, is a means of excavating and reflecting critically on subjectivity in its formation and living. To do so is to invigorate research with a deepening understanding of how we as researchers are shaped and constituted (p.13). It is a challenge to the idea that it is legitimate to probe into the lives of others while 'we (as researchers) hide between and behind the lines of the text that we produce' (p.13); and it is a challenge to the abhorrence of narcissism that excludes and pushes the personal away, something which Rockhill suggests is in itself a form of 'voyeuristic hiding' (p.13). To welcome exploration of subjectivity into research is to release 'tones of feeling, of embodiment, of the personal' into the process of meaning making, and this does not constitute a loss of academic rigor. Rather, Rockhill argues, it is a means to expose aspects of subjectivity to 'rigorous scrutiny for the purposes of transformation or confirmation' (p.13). Drawing on Lorde, Rockhill suggests that:

The quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we hope to bring about through those lives.,as we learn to bear the intimacy of scrutiny, and to flourish within it, as we learn to use the products of that scrutiny for power within our living, those fears which rule our lives and form our silences begin to lose their control over us (Lorde, 1984, p.36 in Rockhill, 1987, p.14).

This resonates with how I have experienced the 'participatory process'. Whilst the 'doing' has been a productive and a joyful experience of working with others who I have formed a deep attachment to, the accompanying 'troubling' of the process has unearthed fears and anxieties within me over 'good' and 'right' ways of conducting myself in relation with my co-participants. To expose and work with the anxiety and fear associated with the participatory process is to begin to reconstitute myself in relation to the methodology that I have lived. It is to push into a new, personal understanding of what it means to be 'participatory'. There isn't perhaps anything

new that I can say about being 'participatory', Audre Lorde suggests that 'there are no new ideas, there are only new ways of making them felt' (Lorde, 1984, p.39).

Therefore, in keeping with Rockhill, it is the *living* of the process that I want to bring out in this thesis. Therefore, what I have as new knowledge begins in an examination of my connection *into* the participatory process, how it has been *felt*, and that is what I offer here.

There has been a layering in my understanding of why I want to find a personal, subjective, emotional (and at times stubbornly irrational) voice in which to speak about the participatory process. It is my response to the chaos of practice, and it is an enactment of my refusal to create a neat package around the notion of being 'participatory'. It is an acknowledgement that despite my efforts to understand it, being participatory is a delightfully unwieldy, unknowable, ungraspable process. It is an understanding that working with the emotional and personal can become a fruitful space for knowledge production. It is also a response to the specificities of doing a participatory intervention orientated around mental health, and my understanding of this represents another turning point towards committing to *writing in* the personal and emotional dimensions. Having presented a paper at the 'Alternative Psychiatric Narratives' conference in May 2014, a participant emailed me suggesting that I read Kathryn Church's 'Forbidden Narratives: Critical Autobiography as Social Science' (1995). At the conference I had spoken about wanting to make myself visible within the archive of mental health recovery stories, and she felt I may be trying to travel through some of the same dilemmas that Church had negotiated in her own research into the Canadian Psychiatric Survivor Movement.

Reading Church's account of her research experience was a liberating moment for me. Her account of the questions she asked of herself, and the struggle she went through to get to the point of choosing a position from which she would speak, echo with mine. Her search for a critical framework in which she would encapsulate her research, though different in its specifics, still resonated very strongly with my own experience; to the extent that where she quotes from her own journal I can on occasion find equivalent passages (although perhaps not as eloquently expressed) in mine. She seems to have traversed down the same routes of exploration and outcomes as I have. Her resistance to position herself within 'one' theoretical framework; her resistance to posing askable research questions before acting; her commitment to acknowledging the inconsistencies, the wanderings, and spaces which continually remain unanswered even as you progress around them; and the tension that taking these stances can create for the individual is

there within her text (Church, 1991, p.46). I feel I have lived and documented those tensions in my research too. Most significantly for me, she presents an argument as to why the personal and emotional *had to be written in* to her PhD. She talks about researching in the context of the psychiatric survivor movement in which the survivor, by virtue of their position as 'expert by experience', is continually expected to participate through personal disclosure because the survivor's legitimacy is accepted on the basis of their personal experience. In situations where 'survivors' and 'professionals' seek to work together on an equal footing the expectations around disclosure are asymmetrical: one has little choice but to disclose, whilst the other is free to compartmentalize 'public' and 'private' because their expertise is predicated on different grounds. The professionals right to 'compartmentalize' speaks into, and can reinforce, unequal power relations. It is therefore detrimental to the development of mutual understanding and respect. Church draws on Rockhill to suggest that:

Not until we begin to talk out of our own dark recesses can we appreciate fully the risk for others as we, with the best of intentions, ask them to open up for us (Rockhill 1987, p.13 in Church, 1995, p.67).

Church also argues in favour of personal disclosure as a means of enacting the ethical principle of reciprocity as the basis of a trusting relationship (Oakley 1981: 49 in Church 1995, 67). I realized as I was reading her work why her words resonated with me so strongly; it is because I had already made the same articulation myself from within my pages in the archive of mental health recovery stories:

Working on my pages on Omeka has opened my eyes to the complexity of what I am asking each of the other four contributors to do in relation to telling their own story in a public space. As I write this I feel vulnerable - what parts of myself and my narrative belong here? How will what I write be received? How will I come across? How do I negotiate the boundaries between private and public? Why am I doing this if I find it so difficult? It is *because* I have asked the four contributors to give something of themselves to the archive that I feel very strongly that I should do the same. Although I can never thank Peter, Stuart, Dolly and Andrew enough for what they have done, I want to reciprocate, and I hope that in opening myself up to something of the same process, that I am reciprocating in a small way (Sexton, 2014).

Letting my personal voice into the formal writing of my PhD thesis is in keeping with the decision I made in relation to the construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories itself. In that context, I felt that it was a necessary element in negotiating the reciprocity between the four contributors and myself. On what grounds then could I argue

that the same should not be the case for my formal PhD writing? My encounter with Church's work gave me the confidence to resist the creation of a dichotomy in my academic writing that closes down access to my personal lived experience of the research process. However, I acknowledge that there is still a necessary negotiation at the borders between what remains private and what I choose to publicize. This negotiation takes into account my own levels of comfort in sharing, and the need to respect the rights of others who have at times shared things with me in confidence. I am excavating from my journals, seeking to authentically represent the process from my perspective, challenging myself to acknowledge how much of the process has been about what I *feel* as well as what I do, while knowing that this representation can only offer selected insights.

The voice in which I will speak about the participatory process is a personal one, and in doing so I am drawing on the multiple threads of discourse from within academia that legitimate the value of subjectively embedded experiential knowledge. In positioning myself as central I am moving myself as 'observer' into view as central in the knowledge construction process. I see myself not as an essentialized, authentic and unchanging self, but as someone who is continually socially formed from within the changing conditions, relations and frameworks in which I am situated. Writing myself into the research is a way of acknowledging how I shape the process and the process shapes me in dialectic relationship (Stivers, 1993). Positioning myself in this way draws me towards critical autobiography and auto-ethnography, as methods which seek to understand the self in cultural connection to others as a means of exploring the social world (Coffey, 1999).

### **A confessional tale**

Turning to the literature around ethnography has helped me to clarify in more depth the benefits and pitfalls of my chosen approach. Ethnography is tied into creating written representations of a culture (or aspects of a culture). Traditionally it involves a period of fieldwork in which a researcher is displaced and embedded into a culture for a set period of time, to live amongst others 'on their home ground', as a means of getting to know and beginning to understand those others (Van Maanen, 2011, p.2). Here I am not claiming ethnography as a research methodology, there are clear degrees of separation between its starting points and my own. Yet I have *lived* the research process, and perceive myself as a participant observer. In alignment with ethnographic approaches I am claiming that *experience* underlies understanding and is the basis of knowledge production (Penniman,

1974; Rock, 1979; Georges and Jones, 1980). I therefore recognize that there is a degree of synergy and overlap between my approach and the approaches embedded in ethnographic research to the extent that the questions, difficulties and complexities tied up in ethnographic research resonate with some of the issues I have faced. Particularly in relation to turning my vast reflections captured in my research journal into an adequate written account. Van Maanen's *Tales of the Field* became a corner stone for me in grappling with issues of representation. In the very first chapter, Van Maanen uses Clifford (1988) to frame the burning question that I felt I was grappling with:

If ethnography produces cultural interpretations through intense research experience, how is such unruly experience transformed into an authoritative written account? How precisely, is a garrulous, overdetermined, cross-cultural encounter, shot through with power relations and personal cross purposes circumscribed as an adequate version of a more-or-less discrete "otherworld" composed by an individual author? (Clifford, 1988, p.25 in Van Maanen, 2011, p.1).

Van Maanen (2011) is concerned with exploring the relationship between the written representation of a culture and the experience of fieldwork, and to this end he suggests that the predominant type of 'tale' created by ethnographers in writing up research is the 'realist tale' (pp.45-72). In a realist tale a 'single author narrates' in a 'dispassionate, third-person voice'. The realist tale effectively 'swallows up' the researcher (p.47), with the presence of the author relegated to limited accounts of research strategies and positioning:

The narrator of the realist tales poses as an impersonal conduit who...passes on more-or-less objective data in a measured intellectual style that is uncontaminated by personal bias, political goals, or moral judgments. A studied neutrality characterizes the realist tale (p.47).

A realist tale is typically unconcerned with drawing too much into the account in relation to problem setting and framing. The politics or preferences that have dictated what is going to be studied, and how, remain untouched and un-problematized from within the written account. This lack of 'troubling' or 'reflection' in relation to the frames sitting around the research, is carried through in relation to data collection and analysis where the researcher refrains from drawing attention to concerns with the 'accuracy, breadth, typicality or generality' of the representation created in the text (p.51). In short, there is no room for 'self-reflection' and 'doubt' in a realist tale (p.51). Instead, the author 'pushes firmly for the authenticity of the representations conveyed by the text' (p.45).

Knowing that constructing a 'realist tale' wasn't in any way shape or form what I wanted to create, I turned with some excitement to Van Maanen's (2011) description of the antithesis to the 'realist tale' which he describes as the 'confessional tale'. The 'confessional tale' is a 'highly personalized' style of account (p.73), in which the author is 'close at hand' to bring in the sub-text of how the created work has come into being, and how the research has been *lived*. At once I was alerted to an undertone of criticism in Van Maanen's (2011) description of the confessional tale as a 'self-absorbed mandate' (p.73) and his assertion that:

Much confessional work is done to convince the audience of the human qualities of the fieldworker. Often the ethnographer mentions personal biases, character flaws, or bad habits as a way of building an ironic self-portrait with which the readers can identify (see, I am just like you, full of human foibles). The omnipotent tone of realism gives way to the modest, unassuming style of one struggling to piece together something reasonably coherent out of displays of initial disorder, doubt or difficulty (p.75).

Van Maanen (2011) describes how the details that matter in a confessional tale are those that constitute the field experience of the author. In this way the researcher becomes a 'human bundle of exposed nerve endings' interpreting 'emotional reactions', and describing 'new ways of seeing things' as a means to communicate how the researcher has come to understand the studied scene. He describes how, as autobiographical details mount within the confessional tale, the fieldworker's perspective is typically presented as a 'character-building conversion tale', in which the fieldworker is personally transformed in some way through the research process (p.77). Along the way the confessional tale will draw on moments of shock and surprise: the blunders inherent in the research process, the gaffes, and the unresolvable tensions within the research (p.77). The reader will no doubt recognize these conventions in the written representation carried forward from this point in this thesis. When I came to Van Maanen, I had begun experimenting with finding my personal voice. In reading Van Maanen's caricature, I was horrified to recognize the characteristics of my own writing, not least because I felt my experience was unique and genuine, and my written representation of it was anything but contrived. Yet, mine is a tale of grappling with uncertainty and moments of failure. I make my own limitations visible as far as I myself see them and, in all this, I do fall back on a sub-text of personal development and transformation through and in the research. Here, I am turning the convention of the 'confessional tale' in on itself by 'confessing' the ways in which my own writing is in keeping with this genre. I am deliberately drawing attention to the fact that I will go on from here to follow its normative plot lines.

If there is a genre for the confessional tale as presented by Van Maanen, does the fact that my own written representation follows its normative conventions delegitimize my work? Does his rather cruel caricature negate the value in the approach? Van Maanen (2011) points out that the purpose of the confessional tale is to 'lift the veil of public secrecy over fieldwork' (p.91). I have felt the desire to lay visible the inner workings of the research process in its messiness, its incompleteness, its compromises, and its dead ends. This has been coupled with a desire to lift the veil on the notion of 'transformative participatory approaches': to get away from the triumphalist rhetoric; to expose the difficulties and the tensions; and to get underneath the impossibility of doing it well. This I believe can only be achieved in and through a confessional approach. Van Maanen (2011) suggests that there is a way in which the confessional can be judged, and perhaps the legitimacy of the approach depends on which category my thesis falls into:

In skilled hands the personal voice can be a gift to readers and the confessional becomes a self-reflective meditation on the nature of ethnographic understanding; the reader comes away with a deeper sense of the problems posed by the enterprise itself. In unskilled hands, a wild and woolly involuted tract is produced that seems to suck, the author (and reader) into a black hole of introspection; the confessional is obsessed with method, not subject, and drifts towards a single-minded, abstract representation of the fieldwork experience (p.92).

Van Maanen goes on to say:

Yet however involuted some confessional accounts may appear, the reader who wonders why confessional writers don't do their perverse, self-centered, anxiety work in private and simply come forward with an ethnographic fact or two are, quite frankly, missing the point (p.93).

The reader is therefore free to judge the quality of my confessional tale, and the degree to which it fulfills its objectives. However, to argue that I should have chosen a different, less personal, more 'realist' voice is, as Van Maanen suggests, to entirely miss the point of what I am hoping to achieve.

## **Getting Lost**

Choosing a confessional approach to writing is part of my personal research trajectory. It is bound up in my choice of action research and in my desire to lay bare the inner workings of a participatory process. It is also my response to working with Dolly, Stuart, Peter and Andrew. Yet, the rise of the confessional as a means of communication can be embedded in a broader story. It is part of the 'post-' (post-structural, post-modern, post-



Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
theory, post-foundationalism) turns across the disciplines. These 'turns' have laid bare the limits of representation. They have created an erasure of certain knowledge through the exposure of the fallacy of value-free science and the subsequent loss of pure presence (Lather, 2007, p.1). Thus, the 'post' turns have meant that the validity of the 'view from nowhere' (Spanos, 1993) has come under intense scrutiny. Following 'the end of transcendent claims and grand narratives' (Lather, 2007, p.1), critical researchers have found themselves positioned in a space and time in which 'methodology is under erasure' (Lather, 2007, p.1). Under such scrutiny a twentieth century 'turn' towards 'situatedness, perspective, relationality, and narrative' has emerged, fighting for legitimation (Lather, 2007, p.4).

I have turned to the work of Lather, whom I discovered through the writings of Kathryn Church, whose standpoint and approach have been formative for me. Speaking from a feminist perspective, Lather has a research trajectory that encompasses an interest in PAR and she engages in praxis that is designed to be 'openly ideological' (Lather, 1986b). One of her most recent research projects, *Troubling the Angels*, was a narrative based project in which the stories of 25 women with HIV/Aids were written as advocacy, in interaction and negotiation with the participants (2007, p.35). Out of that work, she developed a methodological text called *Getting Lost*, which seeks to address the ways in which research that is situated in struggles for social justice can be deconstructed and 'troubled' as part of the practice. Lather suggests that developing methodologies that foreground 'getting lost' in the research process become a legitimate response to the crisis of representation. Lather herself argues for the creation of a research text that 'interrupts itself and gathers up its interruptions into its texture' (Lather, 2007, p.4). Lather describes 'Getting Lost' (the title of her book, and proposed methodology) as:

Writing against the authoritative voice of the kinds of knowledge we are used to, knowledges of demarcation and certitude...Its sensibility is toward that which shakes any assured ontology of the 'real,' of presence and absence, a postcritical logic of haunting and undecidables. A central claim is that such aporetic suspension is ethical practice in disenchanting times (Lather, 2007, p.4).

I find the foregrounding of the writing process, as central to the knowledge production process refreshing in Lather's (2007) work. She draws on St Pierre (1997a and 1997b) to talk of the 'thinking that writing produces' (Lather, 2007, p.33). I can testify to finding that the space in which I have tried to write is the space in which the meaning making in the research process emerges. In a sense, this mounts a challenge to the simplicity of the 'knowledge-in-action' ethos running through action research. I have found that although I

have certainly attained experiential knowledge by being and acting in the process, writing about it produces a different kind of experiential knowledge, layered onto the experience but removed from its immediacy. Therefore, it is the writing process that has enabled me to enter into a more in-depth sense making process. Lather suggests that this is to engage in the 'thinking that writing produces' (Lather, 2007, p.33).

For Lather, 'Getting Lost' is fundamentally about situating an inquiry as a ruin that 'foregrounds the limits and necessary misfirings of a project' (Lather, 2007, p.10). It is a mode of representation that attempts to be 'accountable to complexity', and it commits to thinking at the limits of the experience. Lather argues that this is not a methodology for writing that is about an 'epistemological skepticism taken to defeatist extremes', but a methodology that carries the hope of being the means through which to move oneself into new practices (Lather, 2007, p.11). Lather uses Pitt and Britzman's concepts of 'difficult' and 'lovely' knowledge (2003) to draw a distinction: lovely knowledge reinforces what we want to find from our research, whilst difficult knowledge induces breakdowns both in terms of the ways in which we represent experience and what we think we want to find from our research. In the latter, accepting loss becomes the very force of learning, and opens up the possibility of beginning to think and do otherwise. Ellsworth describes this mode of research as 'coming up against stuck place after stuck place' as 'a means of moving in order to produce and learn from ruptures, failures, breaks, refusals (Ellsworth, 1989 in Lather 1991, pp. xi). Given the many times in which I have felt lost in this research process- overwhelmed by the complexity, acting in uncertainty in the midst of what have appeared to me as unresolvable tensions- I find a deep resonance with the motif of becoming lost in research. The notion of 'getting lost' precisely encapsulates how I would describe the action research process. Neat iterations of planning, acting and reflecting have given way (as I have entered the active participatory phase of the research) to a messy, chaotic, process in which these cycles are jumbled up in the 'doing'. In the active phases, when working on the participatory archive, I have proceeded whilst becoming less and less certain about the foundations on which the archive has been premised. Lather, encapsulates what I feel I want to achieve- to use my uncertainty as a means of pushing into new knowledge. However, I recognize that this becomes an extremely difficult balancing act. To represent the open-ended aspects of the research- the frayed ends, the stumbling blocks, the multitude of problems that it could not solve- while keeping the reader on side and believing that this research has academic validity will not be easy. This is particularly the case because I am seeking to create a 'double, equivocal, unstable' (Derrida 1996, p.55 in Lather, 2011, p.37) narrative. Yet I embrace what Marcus (1994)

calls the 'messy text', which arise across the disciplines as a response to the 'loss of legitimating metanarratives'. I do so because such an embrace has enabled me to move forward in my understanding of participatory approaches. What I hope will come through in this thesis, through my own 'getting lost' represented here, is my emergent understanding of participatory approaches that seek to be transformatory. The reader will traverse with me through the spaces in which I have been 'stuck' in the face of seeking to be 'participatory'. It is through those 'stuck' moments that I have come to an understanding that there is no 'innocent' place from which to do research and/or practice. There is no methodology (participatory or otherwise) that can take me to an equal, non-exploitative way of proceeding. There are always inescapable power relations (Lather, 2007, p.39). However, what I can do (and seek to do here in this thesis) is embrace the participatory space that I have constructed with others as a within/against location (Butler, 1993). Being 'within' and 'against' enables me to keep moving and producing knowledge in recognition of the non-innocence of any practice, participatory or otherwise. This within/against movement is about doing the participatory process and troubling it simultaneously. This is something I found difficult to do completely 'in the moment of action' but I found became easier as I started to write. This troubling has shifted my understanding of participatory methodology itself. Through this thesis I have lost and then, to some extent, regained a sense of its potential. It does not guarantee or necessarily enable entry into more innocent, less exploitative places of doing, knowing, and acting with others (Lather, 2007, p.39). Such places always and only exist as illusory ideals. Yet, it can still be a relatively productive methodology through which to confront, trouble and to a degree change the 'field of play' in the doing. This shift in understanding around what being 'participatory' means to me, both within and beyond academic contexts, led to inviting the participants I worked alongside to reflect with me on the participatory process we shared. This invitation gradually emerged as I tried to write about the participatory intervention. The hard boundary that I constructed around my reflexivity on process for the purposes of my PhD necessarily gave way to welcoming Dolly, Andrew, Peter and Stuart to reflect with me both on the process we shared, and my reflections on the process. This means that I have been able to write a piece in which they are more embedded as co-researchers and co-producers here in this thesis. My authorial voice, although dominant, is necessarily more tentative in tone that it would have been otherwise, and at points there is a layering of our perspectives that remain open against each other to operate as a stubborn refusal to completely lock down knowledge to a single point of view. It is a troubling of the notion that I should have the absolute final word, even here in my PhD thesis.

Doing research in this vein requires adopting what Lather refers to as a 'naked methodology', which ties into Van Maanen's (1988) notion of the 'confessional tale'. However, she cautions against a straightforward representation of the researcher as 'transparent, vulnerable, and absolutely frank' (p.17), and instead suggest that a 'naked methodology' must be 'mindful of the dangers of reinscribing the potentially fully conscious, individualized, humanist subject' (p.17). This is this tightrope that I walk in taking this approach. I recognize the limits of my ability to see and know. I am not fully conscious and aware but blinded in various ways. Therefore everything presented here is a partial picture. The 'real' of the 'experience' remains always lost, and I can only reproduce a partial relic from my situated position. Still I argue that there is a value in critical self-reflection. I believe that the partial relic can still speak and reveal a 'truth', as long as it is not understood as 'the' truth.

Finding a means of bringing all this to bear, to write in a way in which 'I' becomes the 'eye' through which both the participatory process and my resulting research on that process is problematized (Lather, 2007, p.122), in a way that recognizes and troubles the limits of this form of representation in the midst of the representation itself, is the most fraught writing project that I have ever undertaken. For me, to push on these boundaries is a leap into the experimental and I know that in a first attempt I will not be satisfied with what I produce. In my reading of this thesis I can see that it carries in it an air of awkwardness, a stuttering, a falling in and out of achieving what it sets out to achieve. At times, I find it a difficult read in its struggle to find the right tone. Yet I justify my approach as a legitimate response to all that I have come to understand through and in the research process. The culmination of which has led me to want to break out of the straight jacket of neutrality, objectivity and distance that have characterized my personal experience of being a professional archivist, and to some extent my experience of being an academic researcher. How well I do in negotiating the complexities of this form of knowledge production, and the extent to which my chosen voice can contribute new knowledge around the concept of 'being participatory', is for the reader to judge.

### **An afterword**

I have been prompted by feedback from my supervisors to reflect further on my perceived need to 'break out of the straightjacket of neutrality, objectivity and distance'. Whilst in discussion we recognized that these characteristics have been embedded in my disposition and identity as a professional archivist (making the notion of 'breaking out' or

'breaking away' from learned behaviour a fitting description) there is a question mark over the extent to which it is also an applicable metaphor for my experience of academia. I have three supervisors who are supportive of academic research that seeks to be deeply engaged and personal. They have unreservedly legitimated my decisions in taking this approach, and in different ways have acted as role models for me in taking this stance. They have never cast me into the role of 'objective, neutral, distanced' researcher so why is it something I feel I am breaking away from? We agreed that my sense of the appropriateness of the metaphor for both 'selves' (professional archivist and academic) speaks of my own internalization of the dominant approaches to academia. Although pressure to adhere to a 'realist' or 'scientific' or 'positivist' approach is not in any way weaved into the shaping of my immediate supervisory relations, I still *feel* that tension within myself, and in fact confront it often in pervasive and subtle ways when stepping outside of the comfort of my immediate supervisory circle into the wider academic environment. Every time at a conference or interview when the tone of the questions is asking me to speak about my research as if it can be boxed into neat, succinct, key findings, I feel I am confronting the dominant modes of research in academia, needing to make a case for why I *can't* speak of this research in those terms. So I hold to that metaphor of 'breaking out of the straightjacket' as relevant to my experience as professional archivist *and* academic.

## Chapter 7: Building the Archive, Being Participatory, Negotiating Control

In this chapter I seek to provide a description of 'moments' from the initial phase of construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories. Part 1 focuses on my initial meetings with Dolly, Stuart, Peter and Andrew. It also explores my subsequent interactions with the Wellcome Library around establishing a digital architecture for the archive. Part 2 focuses on the establishment of collaborative workshops with the contributors, and a pivotal conversation within the first workshop. The narrative for Part 1 is a reconstruction from my research journal, and Part 2 is drawn from my research journal along with a transcribed extract from the first contributor workshop (recorded 5 February 2013). Collectively, these parts take an extremely partial slither out of the volume of interaction and events that I have documented in the course of this research. I have constructed the descriptive narrative as a means to begin to open the participatory experience up, inviting the reader inside my representation. The aim is to provide the reader with an initial *feel* for the experience as I have lived it. I pick up on the themes of power and control circulating in and around these descriptions, and use my experience to trouble my understandings of the transformatory participatory process and related participatory discourse. I include extracts of interviews with two of the contributors, Dolly and Andrew, who offer different perspectives on my control. I leave these extracts open as layered perspectives on the process. The chapter seeks to capture a sense of the haunting questions that have followed me throughout the active phases of my research. These questions manifest as an anxiety, an unsettling, and uneasiness: Am I doing 'good'? Are my actions 'good enough'?

### Part 1

#### The start of my journal

The point in the research process when I was able to identify that I wanted to design a transformatory participatory intervention was a pivotal moment and marks the beginning of my research journal. Yet as my journal itself testifies to, having reached this point of clarification and understanding I was not by any means in a certain place with what felt to

me like a defined research path. My early journal entries are filled with expressions of my own uncertainty:

The canvas isn't blank. I have made some important decisions, narrowed the field down. However, right now it feels completely and utterly empty. A massive daunting chasm. Endless white nothing stretched out in front of me. How do I progress from here?...I don't feel able to move forward, I have no idea what I am doing. It is completely possible that nothing remotely intelligible or useful will come from all the reading and thinking I have been doing and I will have to live with what will be a massive waste of everyone's time and effort (Journal, January 2012).

There was a multiplicity of possible ways forward and I was acutely aware that with each new choice that I made I would be actively shaping the direction of what would emerge as the end product. The tension created by reflective action is something I have kept coming back to in my journal as being both an enabling and disabling aspect of this type of research:

I have never taken this much time to think through the initial stages of a project process before. I actually think I am now too aware of the importance of my decisions. Everything is becoming over analyzed and the feeling of uncertainty over whether I am making sound choices is getting a bit pathetic. I am not sure I like journaling - it makes me paranoid. I just need to get on with some practical stuff or I will just go round in circles for the next couple of years (Journal, January 2012).

Taking a reflective stance has meant constantly negotiating the fine line between worrying myself into inertia, and progressing in critical awareness. I was intensely aware in the initial stages of the process of how much control I was holding as the process instigator, and how pivotal my early choices were:

Everything I am reading about participatory approaches and giving over control fails to adequately draw out how much is negotiated and built before any participants get anywhere near the process. The authority lies with me because I am now making all the fundamental decisions that will determine the horizons of what is possible. Yes I am constrained in some ways, but that is mainly a constraint that I impose through my perception of what is possible within the PhD framework that I am sitting within, and within the organizational framework offered at the Wellcome Library. It is my perceptions of what is possible, my reading of the situation that determines how I move within the boundaries that I 'perceive' to exist. What I am doing now is setting that initial trajectory, putting those initial markers in. However the process unfolds I think it will be important to draw attention to my initial influence (Journal, January 2012).

Central to my concerns at this time was the fact that I had identified the specific type of participatory research I was interested in exploring. I wanted to connect my research to a

social issue to analyze the nature of a participatory process that would speak into injustice, aiming to be transformational in the social world. Yet, what was causing my stomach to knot was that in searching for a social issue to 'hang' the research on I felt fraudulent. The process was undeniably artificial and contrived. Implicit in the literature around this kind of participation is the notion that the identification of the issue comes before the commitment to a participatory process. The fact that I was disturbing this natural order exposed my underpinning motivations to myself to an uncomfortable degree. Whatever 'issue' I identify as needing transformation, I was locating it, in the first instance, because I want to explore a specific type of participatory process as part of my academic research. It is therefore self-interest that is the initial impetus for action. Equally, however, I knew that to engage in participation that seeks to make a transformation for the better I had to find an issue that I would care about and believe in. It had to be something that I would want to engage in transforming. If you are committing to making a difference for the better in a given situation than you have to be able to politically, emotionally and morally align with at least the need to address and change the status quo. My journal records my early jottings, noting these tensions down. Even at these early points, I suggest to myself that 'looking into the marginalization of the patient voice in mental health' may be a good fit. I felt it would make sense in relation to the collections at the Wellcome Library, and also make sense for me personally, as something I would be interested in, that I would care about. Struggles with mental health are woven into my life - my grandfather was a manic depressive, my mother had a mental breakdown, one of my brothers is bi-polar, and the other had a major bout of depression in his teens, and in the extended family there are many other instances of people I have grown up now with diagnostic labels including schizophrenia. I have also had my own experience of post-natal depression. This has awakened me to the injustices that can come out of stigmatizing attitudes, and the depth of ignorance that pervades societal understandings around mental health. Therefore, connecting my research with mental health was and is emotive for me. Although all things are relative, as I will explore, orientating the research around mental health felt close to home. There were other possibilities that I looked into to varying degrees, but it was mental health that spoke to me.

What, who, how, why? Everything is so open. It sounds positive but it's not – it's undecided. I need more structure (Journal, February 2012).

In some ways translating these ideas into concrete plans occurred more easily and quickly than I anticipated that it would. I began by reading published literature generated by



mental health service users, particularly autobiography, memoirs and stories. This was a new experience for me, taking me out of the academic literature I had immersed myself in within the PhD, into personal accounts from people who have lived with mental distress, and through systems that have oppressed and silenced them. My immersion in these personal stories was fundamental in shaping my vision of what my research may entail. I began to pull out of the vagueness the idea that I/we could construct a participatory archive that would be structured primarily around individual personal narrative:

The autobiographies and survivor stories I have been reading feel alive. There is nothing like personal testimony for connecting the reader to the text. I am always drawn to personal narrative. I think I like it because it is so emotive. If I am thinking of building a participatory archive connected to mental health then basing it around personal stories would be my ideal (this of course depends on the participants and what they envision etc). Working in a participatory way means that the concept of 'archive' is necessarily open to creative interpretation. I can see how the structure of the archive could be a narrative life story created by each participant. If it was a digital archive they could pull relevant records into their narrative (photos, films, documents etc) building their archive as a multi-media memoir...of course this all depends on who the participants are and what they want to do, but I can see the potential here to do something really interesting (Journal, March 2012).

I am struck looking back on my journals how even this early on in the process, I had already begun to articulate what turned out to be 'the' vision of the archive that we did go on to construct. Even before a single participant had been invited, I had already imagined and given form to the possible. The archive started with me.

I can read into its initial trajectory my own history. It speaks back to me about my relationship to the concept of the 'archive'. I can see how it has flowed from my frustration with traditional conceptions of archives as accumulative by-products of administrative activities, which has always felt to me to be restrictive, limiting the possibilities of how archives are configured. It is this 'traditional' vision that I was desperate to move away from. My interest in 'life history' that was expanded through a Certificate in Life History, undertaken while I was an archive assistant at the Mass-Observation Archive at the University of Sussex, is also there in my inclination to move *towards* personal narrative as a structural template. Here then, is the beginning of the inescapable tension between 'I' and 'we' that I have continually lived with, and agonized over, throughout the creation of what I always wanted to be a 'participatory archive'. Participatory archiving has its rhetoric of decentralizing the archivist, and carries a vision of working under shared authority and control with participants. Yet what I discover is myself at the very centre. From the very

beginning, I was setting the initial trajectory as an outpouring of my biography as an archivist.

### Meeting Jerome Carson

Finding the participants who would participate with me in the creation of the archive happened in the space of a few weeks. I had read *Mental Health Recovery Heroes Past and Present* (Carson et al, 2011) and, following up a suggestion from a member of the Special Collections team at the Wellcome Library, I contacted Jerome Carson (one of the editors of this volume) to talk over my initial ideas. We met at the Wellcome at the beginning of April 2012. Jerome had just retired from a career as a clinical psychologist (he is now Professor of Psychology at Bolton University). Jerome needed me to paint a picture of who I was, and what my plans were. My contextual framing of myself was as an archivist and PhD student with an interest in mental health but no professional training or experience of working in the mental health field. My contextual framing of my PhD research was to talk in terms of the Wellcome Library's archive collections. I mentioned the bias towards the voice of the professional expert and the institution as opposed to the individual with lived experience. I positioned my plans as wanting to address the gap by working with people to create a multimedia digital archive of their personal experiences. My main question for Jerome was whether he thought that there might be individuals that would be willing to work with me on the creation of the archive. Jerome offered to act as an initial intermediary between some of the individuals he worked with in producing *Recovery Heroes* and myself. He agreed to send four of them (who were chosen by him) an email on my behalf asking them to contact me if they were interested in finding out more. Vague ideas were turning into tangible steps which created a mix of emotions for me- relief that I was making progress, mixed with a familiar feeling of dread that it may all still turn out to be a dead end. Reflecting back on why I met with Jerome before jumping in to contacting potential contributors I can point to a relational link between Jerome and a member of the Special Collections team who was able to pass me his contact details. However, I was also drawn to contacting him as an initial gatekeeper and sounding board because he was the 'professional' element in the *Recovery Heroes* project. At this point I wanted the security and safety of having a 'professional' approve my plans and guide my initial actions. Sitting around this issue is a complex array of motivating factors. To some extent, inexperience, uncertainty and fear held me to the view that I couldn't proceed without some guidance and input from a professional mental health practitioner. Before leaping in I wanted assurance that what I was doing was ethically sound and well thought through. I

wanted to know that I was adequately protecting myself and the individuals I might work with, and I wanted to gain this assurance from someone with experience in similar processes but who was on the outside of the one I was creating. I wanted someone who I could raise all my ethical concerns with before starting out. At my initial meeting with Jerome, I asked all those questions and raised all the things that were on my mind as potential pitfalls and problems:

- What did he think about reciprocity and the fact I couldn't pay the participants but could meet expenses?
- What safeguards should I consider if working 1:1?
- Did he think I needed a professional mental health practitioner working with me?
- Were there any ethical codes of conduct from within the mental health field that I might need to be aware of?

The meeting gave me the confidence to feel that what I was beginning to formulate as an ethical stance was adequate and sensible. I wanted Jerome's experience but more uncomfortably for me, given the way my views on this issue have subsequently developed *as a result of* the process, I acknowledge that I also wanted the easy legitimacy that would come from having the approval and input of a professional clinical psychologist. Jerome's professional status provided a stamp that I could leverage to assure others (such as the Ethical Review Board) and myself that the process was well thought through.

Even before a participant could get anywhere near the process the circulating issues of power, authority and control have been embedded deep within the early phases of the project. The dominant authority of the mental health 'professional' was the very thing that the digital archive is framed to question and speak into, yet in some ways I, and the process I was constructing, had fallen at the first hurdle. I had allowed it (or felt I was bound into needing it) to be formulated under mental health practitioner guidance and approval. Already, my participatory ideals around addressing societal power imbalances were beginning to sit in tension with pragmatic reality. Now I have a much better view of the networks of individuals who have the expertise and experience that I was initially looking for. I didn't have the benefit of experience when I started. The process has now moved me to a position where I could do things differently in the future. When jumping into the unknown, I relied on all my preconceptions of what I would get from a 'clinical psychologist' in terms of expertise, experience and professionalism. I didn't know the person, but I felt I could rely on the 'status' and all that it confers. This speaks to me on

how visible and powerful these societal labels are. That even as I went about seeking to subvert something of the power that they hold, I didn't initially feel able (in my inexperience) to resist relying on that power. This also speaks to the deep tension that I have felt in living this process. Despite the participatory intentions within the project, from the outset the power dynamics have remained somewhat traditional.

Jerome contacted four individuals that he worked with on *Recovery Heroes* on my behalf – Stuart Baker-Brown, Peter Bullimore, Dolly Sen and Andrew Voyce. My attempts to describe to Jerome what I wanted to do were now being passed onto the participants through Jerome's introductory emails. I became very aware that despite the rhetoric in participatory literature around allowing participants to shape the process, I had to make an initial articulation. I had to give the process some form and identity- an outline of the terrain that we might tread, with some initial markers that would indicate at least possible trajectories. It had to be coherent enough to enable the participants to measure what their involvement might entail and where it might lead, whilst still welcoming incoherence to avoid being prescriptive, formulaic and controlling from the outset. I can see the power and influence that I held as I placed those initial stakes into the terrain. I identified the project as a 'digital archive' that would revolve around 'personal narrative' and would speak into the gaps and silences inherent in the mental health archives at the Wellcome Library. In articulating these project markers, I set the boundaries around the process and the institutional context in which it would sit. Keeping a project 'open' has an inherent appeal, and I had every intention to initiate an 'open process'. The concept of 'openness' is easily associated with positive attributes such as hospitality, warmth, acceptance, and possibility. However, what I realize through trying to maintain openness is that it also carries with it a lack of form, incoherence, and vagueness that, if left unresolved, can foster insecurity, frustration and disinterest. My supervisors needed to know what my plans were, as did the ethics review board, as well as my colleagues at the Wellcome Library, Jerome, and the participants. They all need a degree of clarification and specificity that would enable them to make value judgments about me, the process, and their position and role within the process. With every marker that I threw down in those initial stages, I was aware that I was narrowing the possibilities and exerting my control and authority. However, I was equally aware that the process itself demanded this from me. Nothing could be done, no-one could be invited without the exertion of (at least some degree of) initial control and order. I was responsible for creating that 'first order of order'. My influence is significant. My influence is inescapable. At many points in these early stages, I felt that I was fighting against the demands for specificity that were constantly made by every new person trying to work out

what I was trying to do and where they were positioned in relation to my plans. My journal records my unease at having to live the tension between coherence and incoherence, fluidity and form, and how difficult I found it to negotiate the line between open and closed:

Every time I describe what I can envisage about the project, it becomes an element that it is then difficult to negotiate back from. It's because my articulation becomes the marker for the trajectory around which others can then imagine the possibilities. People don't like vagueness- vagueness is disconcerting and inherently bad. They want clear, specific ideas that they can then relate to. Whenever I try not to be too prescriptive about what the process might turn out like- whoever I am talking to questions me into a corner, until I trot out what is becoming my vision, my imagining of what it will all turn out like, and the more this happens the more I am convinced that it is actually impossible to keep things open and negotiable. And does anyone actually want that anyway? When all that is demanded is further clarification and specificity? I am fighting against it in myself and also in everyone else that I talk to so perhaps I shouldn't try to work against it. Until you give something a 'form', no-one can relate to it or evaluate it, so I am increasingly thinking that keeping things open is illusory and impossible to achieve. I feel tense about it like I am failing somehow by not being able to manage or resist being prescriptive, but at the exact same time I can't see how I can avoid it. In my own mind, I need and crave coherence. Not knowing where the process might lead is very difficult to live with, so it's not surprising that I get that from others whenever I speak about it. We all need coherence and definition. I feel like I have my eyes open to the awful, dreadful, impossible side of openness - I never thought I would associate that concept negatively (Journal, January 2012).

The need for specificity and clarification spilled into and over my initial meetings with Stuart, Peter, Dolly and Andrew who all responded positively to Jerome's introductory email and all agreed to meet me to talk in more detail about their possible involvement in creating a digital archive with me around mental health. Here, I will give a relatively straight account (a rich description) of my initial meetings with the four contributors as a means of inviting the reader to use my representation to begin to formulate a judgment over the extent and legitimacy of my initial control. I will then begin to develop my own analytical 'troubling' around the issue of control, measuring it against the tenets of participatory discourse, before drawing on reflections from the contributors.

### Meeting the contributors

I arranged to meet Peter on 10 April 2012<sup>13</sup>. He was in London running training on Hearing Voices in association with Mind at the Cockpit Arts Centre in Holburn, and I agreed to

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<sup>13</sup> The conversations documented in this chapter around my initial meetings with the contributors are reconstructed from the journaling I did immediately after each meeting.

meet him there straight after one of his sessions. I found the centre and the room Peter was training in, but I could hear that the session was still in full flow so I waited down the corridor feeling nervous and awkward. Time slowed as I waited, not knowing where to place myself. A trickle of people started to emerge from the room so I guessed the session had ended and I could go in. I had seen photos of Peter so I instantly recognized him deep in conversation with someone. I heard his Sheffield accent from the conversation we had on the phone. He looked smart in a nice shirt and jeans. I sat down, overwhelmed by nerves, waiting. When the conversation broke I went up to introduce myself. Peter was surprised to see me, he had expected me the following day. I felt myself sinking, had I muddled the dates? It was a slightly awkward start but Peter reassured me it was fine. I found myself reiterating the conversation we had on the phone, and how I wanted to meet him to talk about my plans to build a digital archive. Peter suggested we went for a drink and asked if it was ok to bring his partner and another colleague along, after he had packed up. So I sat back down and waited again. Stomach in knots. Having just met Peter I couldn't be sure, but I felt he seemed drained, as if he had been working intensely. As he packed up, I asked how the training had gone and he talked a little about it. He introduced me to his partner and his colleague and I attempted small talk with them until Peter was ready. We then all walked out and down the road- Did anyone know where to go? Wasn't there a place round the corner? As we walked Peter and I were in front and started talking. Peter: "So will you be able to interview me ok in a bar then?" I was thrown. Me: "Interview you? I wasn't planning on interviewing you, I just want to talk to you, tell you about the project I am working on, see if you are interested, tell you about myself. I'm an archivist and I need help finding my feet with my plans. I don't know if what I think I want to do is a good idea so I am looking for your input." Peter: "Oh I just assumed you were interviewing me. So an archivist, I am not sure I have met an archivist before, what do you do?" Me: "Well I'm interested in creating and looking after records to document the past and present. Records that become historical and help others understand what society is like and what it does. Does that make sense?" Peter: "Yes it makes sense, it sounds very interesting". Me: "So tell me about yourself".

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Conveying the gist of the conversation and the movement of the conversation is what I am aiming to be faithful to here. It is not intended to be (nor could it be) a word for word representation of what was actually spoken. Peter, Dolly, Andrew and Stuart have had the opportunity to read Chapters 6-9 in their entirety and have been encouraged to challenge my narrative, including my constructed account of our initial meetings. Andrew, suggested some minor changes to my account of our first meeting which I have reflected in the text, and has been happy to let the rest of what is documented and analyzed across chapters 6-9 stand. Peter, Dolly and Stuart have been happy to let the whole of my narrative across chapters 6-9 stand.

I had read about Peter's past in *Recovery Heroes* and as we walked to the bar, Peter began his life story with "I was sexually abused by a family friend from the age of 9". How do I respond? I decided to not ask questions but to try and listen carefully. Peter's story flowed easily from him as we reached the bar. I brought everyone a drink, and we settled back into conversation. I asked him whether he found it easy talking about his personal life to someone like me who he didn't know well. Peter: "Oh I am comfortable talking about it, my story is already out there, not everyone is comfortable with disclosing but I made that choice. Disclosure is very important and I don't hold back. I tell my story all the time as part of the work that I do, training, I am very used to it". I asked him about his family, what they thought of him making his story public. Peter: "My kids are all fine with it, my parents are dead. That's all fine".

I found myself trying to explain what I might be planning with the PhD, creating a digital archive at the Wellcome because their collections tell a one-sided view of mental health from the perspective of the mental health practitioner and the institution rather than the patient. I framed my plans in political terms: "I want to redress the balance by creating an archive with individuals with lived experience". I could sense I had Peter's attention and interest. Peter: "I think that sounds very important". So I asked him directly "Would you be willing to contribute to the archive?" Peter: "Yes I would be willing, what would it involve, would you interview me for it or what?" Me: "Well I could do, everything is open at the moment, it might be that I can find some software that would allow you to create your own story yourself in the archive". Peter: "My issue is time, I work 80, 90 hours a week". Me: "Well we could do it in the form of interviews if you wanted to work that way". Peter: "I think that might work better for me to be honest Anna". Peter's phone rings. Peter: "Excuse me, do you mind if I take this, its Channel 4, they are wanting to interview me for a programme". Me: "Yes that's fine go ahead". In my journal I note that it is perhaps experiences with the media that have shaped Peter's perception of researchers wanting to interview him straight off without any relationship or trust being established. I also note a moment of self-doubt and anxiety coming to the surface in response to the interruption. Am I just another in a long line of forgettable researchers wanting to work with Peter? I want more than just a sound bite for a programme. Does Peter realize that? Peter: "Sorry about that". Me: "No problem. Peter can I just tell you a bit about the Wellcome. I want to make its historical links to the pharmaceutical industry clear and see what you think about it, whether it's a stumbling block for you. The Wellcome's founder was called Henry Wellcome and he made his money in pharmaceuticals. The Wellcome is now a Trust and it

isn't linked to industry anymore but there is that historical link, does that worry you?"

Peter: "No it doesn't bother me. Lets get my version of events in there, turn the tables".

Me: "Well you have been really helpful Peter and I am so excited that you are interested in being involved. I have a lot of thinking and preparation to do, and I have to go through an ethical review process and all sorts of things before I can get the project up and running, but can we keep in touch?" Peter: "Yes fine, I look forward to it Anna". Me: "I think its going to be a lengthy process, I can imagine it might take a year or so to build the archive, and I want to work quite closely with the individuals who are involved, establishing trust and a relationship is very important to me. I think informed consent is something you build up".

Peter: "Yes that sounds fine Anna". Me: "You don't need to make a final decision about being involved here, and now, perhaps you might want to mull it over?" Peter: "I don't think I need to, I want to be involved".

Finally we talked about recovery in mental health. I wanted to know if Peter identified himself with recovery. Peter: "Humans have been recovering since they walked the planet. Humans are very resilient, so yes we have the capacity to recover. I don't have an issue with recovery except when it is taken up as a label and used to describe a process devised by psychiatry that has nothing to do with recovery". Me: "So if recovery was a theme for the archive you would be ok with that?" Peter: "Yes I would be fine with that, I don't have a problem with that Anna". Me: "Is there a better theme to describe what you have been through?" Peter: "Well you can describe it any way. Yes you could come up with a different label but my story won't change really".

I left that initial meeting with Peter feeling very excited, He was interested, willing to be involved. I liked him and sensed that we could work very well together. I appreciated his straightforwardness. He was easy to get on with. He wasn't easily phased, and answered things directly and honestly. As the meeting went on, I had relaxed, my nervousness had gone and I didn't feel guarded, I felt very comfortable. My journal records my initial impressions:

I think there is huge potential for me to work well with Peter. I actually can't wait to get started now. Meeting with him has opened up all my excitement for doing life history work and oral history interviewing, I am really happy with the direction my PhD is moving into, it's shaping around the things that I really love to do. If all I get to do is interview Peter and co-create something with him that would be enough (Journal, 10 April, 2012).



In that initial meeting with Peter, I found my neatly forming vision of the digital archive as a space where individuals would work independently on the creation of their story was interrupted by Peter's preconception of what the process would entail and what he would practically be able to offer to the project. He was shaping the boundaries around how we would work together. My reaction to the balance of power and control shifting was relief. There was flexibility and enough give in the project for Peter to be able to determine what his involvement would entail. He was able to alter my rapidly forming preconceptions to accommodate his preferences. I wasn't in complete control, my plans were open to challenge and shaping by the participants. I could legitimately point to elements of co-decision making in the evolving archive.

I met Dolly for the first time two days after meeting Peter on the 12 April 2012 at the Wellcome. I sat in the Wellcome, clock watching and waiting for Dolly, suddenly panicking that I hadn't sent through any details of which part of the Wellcome building she should come to. I had her mobile number but found my messages to her wouldn't send. Where is she most likely to go? I decided to move myself to the public entrance and wait for her there. I had a vague idea of what she looked like from pictures of her on book covers and the Internet. I was nervous about meeting her. I had looked her up online and was taken aback by the level of her creative output: autobiography, film, art, poetry. I had read some of her autobiography. It was a painful read, beautifully written. Why would she want to work with me? I recognized her as she came in. Me: "Hi you must be Dolly, I'm Anna" Dolly: "Yes I am Dolly, hello Anna". Words tumbled out of me, "thanks for coming, I hope you had a good journey, shall we go through to the staff bit and have some lunch?" As we walked I started painting a picture of my plans and myself. I was talking and Dolly was listening, politely. I explained my connection to the Wellcome, about my PhD, how I am interested in collections in archives which aren't accumulated but are deliberately constructed, how I thought this might mean more voices in the archives are heard, how that's what I wanted to explore, how I was looking for a theme and was drawn to recovery in mental health, and how I made the connection with Jerome Carson through a colleague at the Wellcome, how I don't have any professional connection to recovery nor any personal connection so it was new to me. My journal also records that I told Dolly that I was interested in the archive reflecting a range of personal experience of recovery including professionals and individuals with lived experience and everything in between. I envisaged the participation as being broad and potentially inclusive of a multiplicity of voices, including that of the professional mental health practitioner. The inclusion of the professional mental health practitioner seems to have been an element in my initial vision

that subsequently got lost and consumed by events. I cannot point exactly to when that shift occurred, the notion of mental health practitioners also being invited to record personal reflections on their experience of working with the concept of recovery crept out of the project vision silently without me noticing or remarking on a shift in focus.

We talked about how Dolly had lived experience of recovery, but was also connected into consultancy work and advising services. She mentioned the Recovery College and said I should speak to them too from a more professional perspective. Me: "What do you think of the concept of recovery? Do you identify with it? Do you think it's a good overarching theme for a mental health archive of personal experiences?" Dolly: "A lot of what you will find said about recovery has my big fat mouth on it! I have a problem with the way it is being taken up and used by services. I call it finding the Dollyness of Dolly and to that end I identify with it, but it isn't something services can turn into a step by step plan". Me: "So does that mean you don't think it 's a good theme?" Dolly: "I think it's a good theme when it is kept away from psychiatry". Me: "So you would be happy contributing to a mental health recovery archive?" Dolly: "Yes if it allows me to be honestly critical". Me: "I think that is exactly what I would want it to be". She asked me how representative I was going to make the archive, and what my methodology would be. I said because my PhD is exploratory I wasn't going to get too hung up on representativeness. That what ever we do it is always going to be partial. I told her I was going to gather contributors through word of mouth, making connections, and seeing who says yes. We detoured a bit into a discussion about the subjectivity of history. I asked Dolly about her views on the system, and psychiatry, and mental health practitioners. Dolly: "There are many notable exceptions, the good ones, people like Jerome, but on the whole I have been very damaged by psychiatry so I am very wary. If you were a psychiatrist I probably wouldn't be sitting here now". Me: "So the fact that I am not a mental health practitioner, that is a good thing?" Dolly: "Yes that's a very good thing. I wouldn't be ready to trust your motives". Me: "If we are talking about power and control, I think this will be an interesting process because you are the expert in all of this, my expertise is archival and I will try and contribute in that way but you will be shaping your story". Dolly: "That's important to me".

We talked a little bit about Dolly's experience of recovery and more about the possibilities of telling her story using a range of different media hyperlinked together. She seemed really excited by the possibilities. I had her genuine interest. I felt we had a creative connection. She talked about telling her story to trainee psychiatrists and how once when she was talking about services and her thoughts on making them better, one of the

students said they couldn't trust anything she said because she had a diagnosis of psychosis. She implied that actually the student's reaction was really good because it opened up a dialogue, and all the other students defended her. She isn't afraid of reaction. We talked about issues around sensitivity and confidentiality and I said I had a lot more thinking to do but building up trust and informed consent would be the basis of how I saw the archive working. Me: "What do you think would be a good way of handling it?" Dolly: "I have a lot of experience with the media and publishing my story so I have established boundaries. Sometimes details get lost in the editing process to protect people, I am aware of that" Me: "So you don't see it being too problematic?" Dolly: "Not really". Me: "I think that is why I want to have a good 1:1 relationship with all of the participants so that if there is something which might be problematic to include, we can talk about the decision to include or edit".

We talked about the fact that the collection would be deposited at the Wellcome and Dolly felt this was a good thing. The deposit of the collection was important to her, making it permanent, situating it in relation to the other archives. I talked about the mental health collections and the bias towards the voice of the practitioner. She wanted to be part of undoing that bias. Dolly: "At least we can start a conversation about it can't we?" Although I felt like I provided the contextual frame and the political language to describe what the archive might do, I didn't feel I pushed this. Dolly immediately identified with the issue that I was presenting to her. We talked about the Wellcome's historic link to the pharmaceutical industry and Dolly was unconcerned. She felt there might be others with strong opinions about it, but she didn't have a negative opinion of it.

We talked about how the process of building the archive might work. I said I had been reading a lot about participatory approaches to archives but also how participatory approaches are undertaken in many other fields like development, education and health. I said my interest in it was how the balance of power and control between researcher and researched could be disrupted to make it a more shared, equitable, reciprocal process. Dolly commented that in her experience there was a lot of talk about sharing power in mental health but it didn't usually work so well in practice. I asked her why she thought that was and she paused. Dolly: "The system always gets in the way". Me: "I would like to give you as much control over this process as possible". Dolly: "I think you can work in a controlled space and still find that it works for you, it's not so much needing complete control over something, it's more to do with feeling you are being listened to, and have the degree of freedom that you need within what you are doing". Me: "I think that is very

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
insightful. It will be interesting to see how the process unfolds". She agreed I could use her as a sounding board and that we should keep in touch on my progress. She confirmed she was definitely interested in participating.

We also did a lot of small talk in between all of this, much more so than I had done with Peter. What it is like living with her mother. I said we were staying with my parents this Easter. How we both like living by the sea. Brighton. My children. She talked about her nieces and nephews and having to dress as a pirate at their parties. I cannot capture here the fact that Dolly is very witty, she made me smile and she drew out the humour in me. I found myself making jokes in response to hers feeling completely relaxed and at ease.

We also talked about Dolly's own studies and how supportive her university had been when she did her film studies degree which she did while she was homeless. I felt she identified with me as a researcher; there was overlap in our life experiences. We talked about the practicalities, expenses about how I envisaged it being a lengthy process and that my next steps were meeting some more participants, getting through the ethical review and researching potential systems and architecture for the digital archive. She asked who else I was meeting and had already met. When I reeled off the names she knew them all through different projects, networks, events. She was very positive about all the other people I was meeting with. We agreed to keep in touch. Elation again, the meeting had gone as well as I could possibly have hoped for. I was excited by Dolly's creativity and how much I liked her, and the possibilities of what she might do in the archive.

I met Andrew for the first time at the Wellcome on 20 April 2012. Prior to us meeting we had been conversing via email, more so with Andrew than Dolly, Stuart and Peter. In his initial email to me to confirm his interest in the project, Andrew immediately volunteered unprompted the fact that he was relaxed about the link that the Wellcome has with pharmaceuticals because he has an open mind and is still on medication himself. Andrew asked if he could bring his publisher to our meeting as it fell on a day when they were going to be going to another meeting in London together. I agreed that would be fine. We had quite a lot of contact before the meeting reconfirming the practical details.

The dynamic of the meeting with Andrew felt different because there was a third person present who had a working relationship already established with Andrew. Although I met Peter surrounded by other people, they dropped away from us and we talked 1:1. When I

met Andrew his publisher was a part of the conversation and I think she framed the tone and provided a backdrop for our conversation. Whether it was the presence of a third person or not, in my journal I have recorded that I thought the meeting had quite a formal tone to it. My first impressions of Andrew were related to his politeness. He spoke courteously, expressing his gratitude that I invited him to meet me, describing his journey up on the train.

I offered drinks but Andrew and his publisher declined so we sat at a table to talk and I launched into my introduction to my plans and myself. My journal of how I framed my interest reads:

I stressed my interest in exploring how archives are created. That an assumption is made that they will naturally accumulate – but what happens if they are deliberately constructed, more along the lines of oral history collections? I talked about how I had connected with the idea of recovery. How the more I get to know about it, the more I want to know. How I was keen to try and document it through archives built around people's experiences and perceptions (Journal, 20 April 2012).

Reflecting on my journal I note that what began as open questions with Peter and Dolly about whether recovery was the right theme for the archive and whether they were comfortable to identify with it had shifted by the time I met Andrew to a more definite statement of intent from me that the archive would be specifically documenting mental health recovery. I had turned a possibility into something much more concrete and didn't ask (at least in this initial meeting) how comfortable Andrew was in aligning himself with this theme. I was in control of that decision. I was responsible for that shift from questioning uncertainty to definite commitment. I had been open to negotiation but was clearly convinced by Peter's and Dolly's responses to remove that degree of openness and uncertainty. Andrew was of course unaware of this shift. His response was very positive, he was very interested in being involved and felt the project was a good idea. He wanted to contribute.

I told Andrew that I had looked at his graphic art on his slide share pages. I told him I had looked through the presentation called Durham Light and the one called Carry On Mad. I talked about how I thought Durham Light was very insightful. I wasn't sure how to phrase what I meant- I didn't know if it was ok to say that it showed someone with unusual thought patterns and what it must be like to live with that on a daily basis. I wanted to say that it made me realize that the person wasn't necessarily always a victim of an unwanted affliction, that in some ways, on some days it could be quite pleasant. But I held back from

expressing all of that because I didn't feel I had a full understanding of Andrew's experience and the message he might have been aiming to get across. I talked about how I liked the humour in Carry On Mad- that it had more than humour- especially the bit with the needle injecting psychotic medication that went into slow motion, slide by slide. I talked about how I wondered whether the experience with injections was quite central to Andrew's story. He said that it was – he had bad experiences around those injections. Andrew seemed really pleased that I liked his art and the message behind it. He kept saying “thank you for that Anna, it means a lot to me”. We talked about audience for his slides. He said he didn't think many service users would want to see it. He said narrating is important for the individual. He wanted to know if I thought his art could be part of the recovery archive at the Wellcome. I said I thought it would make an excellent contribution, which he was pleased about.

His publisher asked me questions about whether Andrew would create something new or reuse what he had already done for the archive. I said it would be up to Andrew but I would be interested in either. We talked about whether he could create a new graphic slide show specifically around the concept of recovery- his philosophy on it- part experience, part opinion. Andrew seemed taken with this idea and was obviously beginning to think about it. He said he thought it would be important to explore the concept of hope – the barriers to it, as well as finding it. He seemed to be looking for direction from me. I saw in that moment how much control I could have and I edged away from it by saying the choice was his, but we could discuss details when we were a bit further down the line.

I then asked Andrew and his publisher about their plans for a graphic novel based on Andrew's stories. His publisher showed me an example of the type of graphic novel she hoped they would end up with. I asked about what her role was. She talked about taking Andrew's existing slideshows, particularly Durham Light, editing it, and then commissioning a professional graphic artist to do the illustrations. Andrew interjected with how his publisher could take his stories and make them into something new. She seemed slightly uncomfortable with this suggestion, stressing that it was his story, his experience, her job was to make it more accessible to a general audience. She said her base line was “would my mum understand this?” I felt uncomfortable because I wanted Andrew to have control over his own story within the archive and I wanted to stress this to him without offending his publisher and their way of working.

I talked a bit vaguely about how I had done an English Literature degree and was fascinated by the meaning of text and the interplay between authorial intention and the interpretation of the reader and how so many factors are involved in creating the meaning of a text. How is it represented? In what medium? What influence has the editorial process had? Andrew said he had not really thought about it, so I didn't go any further. I sensed I might be walking on difficult terrain. I said I thought the graphic novel was a great idea. How it would tell Andrew's story in a different way and in a new context, how vital it is that stories are told in more than one way. Both Andrew and his publisher agreed strongly and the tension dissipated.

Andrew's publisher brought up the concept of heroes and how Andrew and her had discussed whether there were any heroes in his narratives. Andrew said that the whole point of his art is anti-hero – in illustrating life in mental institutions he wants to show the utter meaninglessness of it for all involved. There can't be any heroes. I was struck by how articulate and reflective Andrew was. He then went on to describe how he did see one person from his years of institutionalism as a hero. He was a Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve who often used to wear a RNVR pin on his tie. Andrew lost the lower part of one leg in a motorcycle accident and would get a lot of pain from calloused and sore skin where his artificial leg rubbed. He talked about how a particular staff nurse would confiscate his wheelchair. He couldn't put on his artificial leg because it was too painful so he would have to hop around the wards. He shared how the RNVR man asked if he could help, and treated the sore part of Andrew's stump. That man was a hero. The thought of Andrew having his wheelchair taken away really affected me and I felt emotional as I listened to him sharing his experiences.

Peppered through our conversation were references from Andrew to Margaret Thatcher, and how he is grateful to her. Even though she made him homeless for a long time, in the long run it meant he could escape being institutionalized. He expressed the irony in his gratefulness. We talked about how recovery was about changing negatives into positives.

We talked about how the collections would be deposited with the Wellcome. Andrew again said he had an open mind on medication. He said it is very important to have an open mind. Andrew and his publisher were curious about the Wellcome. I talked about how the Archives and Manuscripts section is part of the Library and how there is also the Wellcome Collection which runs the public exhibitions. They were keen to get a better feel for it so I said I would take them on as much of a tour as I could with no prior organization. I began

to stress that having something in the archives doesn't mean it will be on public display although it might be used in an exhibition at some point with the necessary permissions. They both seemed to understand what I meant. I said that the collection would be used by researchers. I talked about how I thought the collection would be digital but I was still at the early stages of thinking it through and needed to explore the architecture for this. I said it would probably be an online archive but this was all still to be thought through properly. I said I was interested in what the contributors felt about this, and how it was something I wanted to explore in collaboration. Andrew asked me whether I was aware of the Health Talk Online website and I should look at that if I was interested in stories around mental health. I thanked Andrew and said I would definitely look at it.

About halfway through our conversations we broke to go and get food. After we had finished eating we took the lift up to the third floor where we got out so I could show them the Special Collections reading room looking through the staff entrance door. I then took them up to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and walked them through the team's open plan office. Then out into the public stairwell. We walked down and I showed them the library just briefly on each floor through the glass. We then looked around the exhibition on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. We spent quite a long time looking at, and doing the interactive bits before they realized they had to leave for their next meeting. So I took them down to the public exit and they left.

Through follow up emails with Andrew, I realized Andrew was so keen he wanted to start work on creating content straight away. I realized I hadn't stressed properly that I was still at the very early stages of all this – I was in the preparation stage rather than the action stage. Andrew had the impression that I wanted him to start straight away. I sent Andrew a very detailed email explaining where I was at, and the fact that I had a long way to go with the ethical review committee and setting up the architecture, and that the project wasn't 100% definitely going ahead until everything was confirmed and agreed. Andrew was very understanding and talked about his own MA and how he understands the importance of the ethical review and the methodological process. As with Dolly there was that point of connection over academic research and what it entails. We conversed about timescales to and fro via email. Andrew made everything easy. He was understanding and encouraging. He had an attention to detail and wanted me to give him as much specificity as I could, but understood that the process was only just starting and was necessarily in flux.

I met Stuart Baker-Brown at the Wellcome on 27 April 2012. My first impressions of Stuart was that he was polite and gentle. He had arrived early and was keen to make sure that it



was fine to bring our meeting forward, offering to wait or come back later. It was fine with me. We got a coffee and I began to tell Stuart about my PhD and my link to the Wellcome and about archives, how they are usually accumulated as a by-product of the day to day activities of an organization or a person and how I wanted to explore different ways of archiving. Stuart was deeply attentive to what I was saying. He said he had listened to something on Radio 4 about how history is told by the few- the partial nature of it- and how he felt that should change. There was a point of connection between us. My concerns were resonating with him.

He asked me fairly on in our conversation whether I was recording our meeting. I hadn't discussed this aspect of my research with any of the other participants. I said that I wasn't. I said that after our meeting I would make notes in my journal about what we talked about to aid my memory. I said that I would only use his initials and that I wouldn't show the notes to anyone else, but I would use them as part of my background research and possibly my analysis. He said that was absolutely fine. He said he had been to a paranoia conference at the Wellcome and he was surprised that it was being recorded, as paranoia and feeling that you are under surveillance go hand in hand. I was reflecting on this saying that he was making a really good point, and I should be more conscious of this when I meet people. I should consider the need to be open and transparent about what I would be writing down after the meeting- explaining my procedures- even at this early stage. He said that sounded like a good idea. I was pleased that Stuart had raised this ethical consideration.

We talked about recovery. I explained that I didn't have a professional or personal connection to recovery before starting my PhD but I was drawn to recovery as a concept, and felt it was important to document it in a way that reflected the uniqueness of the individual experience rather than an emphasis on frameworks and methods. He agreed with this and talked about his own experiences. He talked about being told that he was a schizophrenic and he would never recover and how the wrongness of the way he was treated made him withdraw from professional help. He went on to share how meeting someone who he could talk to about anything was a turning point, and how his Churchill expedition to Mount Everest which he calls Mount Schizophrenia was also important. I said I had read his story in the *Mental Health Recovery Heroes* book. Stuart: "I've never read the book but my wife told me it was good". Me: "You've never read it?" Stuart: "No, I don't look back at that sort of thing, I was part of re-think's anti-stigma campaigns a few years ago and I have never seen those either". Me: "Really! Can I ask why?" Stuart: "It's

because I don't think I am good enough. I would find fault with it so it is better for me not to". Me: "I understand".

I talked about how I wanted to give each contributor space to be creative with how they told their recovery story and that I wanted to work in a participatory way, sharing control of the process with all of the contributors. Stuart didn't comment directly on how he felt about this. I told him I had seen some of his photography on the Internet and thought his photographs were beautiful. I asked him whether he would use his photos to tell his story and he said he would, but it would need some thought.

I then explained where I was at with the process- the fact that the project wasn't definite yet as I needed to put an ethics application in, and sort out the digital architecture. He said that was fine, that he understood. We talked about the idea that the collection would be deposited at the Wellcome and used by researchers which Stuart felt was important. We talked about the Wellcome's historic link to the pharmaceutical industry and Stuart said that it didn't concern him.

I asked him how he felt about the fact that I didn't have any knowledge or experience in mental health. Stuart: "I think that it is a good thing because it means you will have an open mind. The fact that you don't have any links with psychiatry is a very good thing. I would have felt more uneasy if you had a background as a mental health professional." We talked some more about his own experiences. I said his reference to past, present and future selves in the Mental Health Recovery Heroes book intrigued me. He asked whether I believed in psychic experiences. I said that I thought there was a spiritual side to life. I had been brought up in a Christian home, so the concept of a supernatural side to our existence comes very easily to me as I was immersed in that as a child. We talked about how past, present and future are more fluid than we realize and this is something that quantum physics is beginning to uncover. I said I thought there was more to life than the neat packages we construct. Stuart: "If I talked openly about my beliefs then people just assume its part of my schizophrenia, that I'm deluded, I have had that response before". Me: "I don't think your views are any more unusual than those in my family. I grew up believing the world was created in seven days and that God made Adam and Eve. All religious people hold unusual beliefs by secular standards". Stuart agreed commenting that only certain types of beliefs are acceptable, especially when you have a history of mental illness. I felt really moved by our conversation. I said that it must be difficult for professionals to know how to deal with it- where do you draw the line between a legitimate

belief and a delusion? Stuart was quite passionate in his response that it doesn't matter, if it is real for that person, it is the truth to them. I said that in the *Mental Health Recoveries* book that he contributed to, one person had commented that no matter how off the wall someone's beliefs or actions seem if you really listen you find that it does actually make sense – that there is truth to it. He wholeheartedly agreed. Stuart: "If you trace it back you can understand how logical it is that the person thinks and feels the way that they do, given their experience". I said I was interested to know more about his beliefs and his spiritual experiences. Stuart: "I am a very visual person, I get vivid pictures. I have one as we are talking now that is telling me that I can trust you". Me: "It is very important to me that you feel you can trust me, but I think that is something I need to earn as we go along". Stuart: "Would the Wellcome be open to me sharing my beliefs?" Me: "That's an interesting question, yes, if its part of your experience. The Wellcome understands the nature of the process that we are undertaking and that it is about personal experience. Did you think they wouldn't be?" Stuart: "I wasn't sure whether they would want that in the archive". Me: "I honestly cannot see any reason why they wouldn't. The Archives Manager, Jenny, supervises me and she completely understands what this project is about and is supportive of the fact that I want to give control over to the participants. Her opinion would be the same as mine- it's your story. The only area where I think they may have an opinion is in relation to handling sensitive information in a way that protects you and protects others, I see that as something that can be negotiated as we go along".

I offered lunch but Stuart declined and we talked briefly about his diabetes and my gestational diabetes. I asked if he was happy for me to keep in touch with him via email and he said that was fine. Stuart said he was very happy to be involved in the project and I again had that feeling of elation as he left. I had found another contributor who I related to, and really liked, I could see the potential for an excellent working relationship to develop. Our meeting had a different dynamic to it, the spiritual and emotional focus of our conversation meant that I felt I had made a different connection with Stuart.

In the month following my initial meetings with Dolly, Stuart, Peter and Andrew I was caught up in making the practical next steps necessary for us to begin working together. I sent emails to them all to thank them for meeting with me, and explained to them that I would be looking into establishing a digital infrastructure for building the archive and that I would be working towards getting ethical approval from UCL for my research.

Reflecting back on my first meetings with Peter, Dolly, Andrew and Stuart, I was operating within the tension around control, order and structure. I was responsible for constructing a vision of what traditional archives are and the ways in which this project would challenge those definitions. I didn't ask the contributors to define archives. Instead, I defined the archive on their behalf. Was I unable to give over the concept of the archive to the contributors to challenge and construct, or was I fulfilling the need to offer them a starting point from which they could envision what their involvement may lead to? I had to build enough of a structure to give the project a shape whilst leaving enough gaps for it to be challenged. My conception of the archive as personal mental health narratives became foundational, an immovable building block around which everything could begin to develop. The institutional context of the Wellcome Library was the cast iron wrapper around the process. With some negotiation I assumed the concept of recovery as the theme around which the personal narratives would be shaped. Peter had proved that there was space within this structure for the contributors to exert their influence, but my footprint was firmly established. However, the anxiety that I felt over this issue before, and immediately after, meeting Jerome had eased following my initial meetings with the contributors because I sensed the beginnings of establishing a working relationship with each of them where there would be the possibility for close negotiation and challenge. Developing a personal relationship with each of them opened up the opportunity for the process to be shared.

### **Building a Digital infrastructure**

The solidity of the project became even more apparent as I looked at the possible options for constructing the archive of personal stories. The seed of the vision for the archive had come early in the process where I first began to journal on the possibility that a digital archival story could be created that would seamlessly weave together different types of creative medium- drawing in audio, film, text, and image. My focus was on the creative presentation of the story, but the story was not to be viewed as transient or ephemeral but worthy of permanent preservation in the long term. In my mind, it was the long-term preservation that distinguished what we wanted to achieve as 'archival'.

The Wellcome Library swung more prominently into frame as I searched for possible software options and the digital environment necessary for constructing the archive. As the Wellcome was the host organization for my research, I had to choose a system that would

be compatible with the working environment they offered and that could be preserved in partnership with them in the long term. The decision making process would clarify my relationship to them, their commitment to my research, and the depth of their involvement in the project. At this point, I was questioning the extent to which I could involve the contributors in the decision making process:

Everything I have read about participatory research suggests that the participants should be involved in the strategic decision-making surrounding the project. To be participatory and make this a shared and equitable process then of course Dolly, Andrew, Stuart and Peter should be given the opportunity to be involved in developing the digital architecture. Should I wait until I have ethical approval from UCL and then work with the contributors on making these decisions? Perhaps I should start by finding out if they would actually *want* to be involved? But if they say yes, then what? Open a door and then find I have to slam it shut because there is hardly any wriggle room in what will be feasible in the context of the Wellcome? That would be pointless. I need to do some preliminary work and negotiating with the Wellcome to see what might be possible first. I have a feeling there will not be much room for negotiation. The choices are likely to be very limited. If there are very limited possibilities then involvement would just lead to frustration and disappointment and might damage relations with the Wellcome. I shouldn't rush into it, I need to be careful. Is maintaining control positive rather than negative in this context? (Journal, 5 May 2012).

Looking back retrospectively I think I was sensing that enabling participant involvement in the context of my early relationship with the Wellcome would have been extremely difficult. It was still a newly forming and unstable relationship where trust was only just beginning to be established. My position was very vague. If I pushed I didn't know what doors I could open. I didn't know my degree of influence in the setting, or the degree of risk that could be taken. I didn't have a firm enough understanding of the culture, of what was possible, permissible, and advisable. I knew I had support within the Special Collections team but it didn't have any certainties attached. Answers to my questions around what I may or may not be able to do came as "lets see what we can push for". It was an unknown for all of us and I felt I was negotiating from a peripheral position. I couldn't invite people in, I didn't know if I had the authority to do so. My own position was too uncertain. In order to share control and authority you need to know its boundaries. Instead of framing my actions as maintaining control, would it be fairer to say I was trying to establish it?

I began to ask colleagues at UCL what systems they would recommend for the sort of archive we were looking to create. Omeka (<http://www.omeka.org.uk>) was mentioned over and over. So I looked into it in more detail. It had the potential to link audio, text, and film into a narrative through its exhibition builder. Its strength was in online presentation rather than preservation, but it did enable metadata to be associated with imported records that

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
could be held in collections. I decided it would be a useful starting point for negotiating with the Wellcome.

The Wellcome's role in the preservation aspect of what we would create was important. The Head of Special Collections was enabling and set up a meeting with the library's Digital Curator and the three of us met on 10 May 2012. He brought an enthusiasm to the meeting. He started off by talking about community archives and how he was really interested in my research. I began to set the scene. How I was looking at digital architectures and I didn't really know a huge amount about the Wellcome's digital repository but I had been looking at Omeka as a product that ticked a lot of boxes on requirements from the point of view of participatory collection building. We discussed the compatibility between the information systems in place at the Wellcome and the digital environment necessary for using Omeka. We talked about whether the Wellcome could run the Omeka software for the duration of the project. There seemed to be a real brick wall around this possibility. Security issues were put forward first as the stumbling block - the ICT system is extremely locked down. It was suggested that it might be best to set Omeka up independently from the Wellcome. We talked about whether UCL would be a more suitable host for the software or whether I should consider using a hosting service such as Omeka.net (<http://www.omeka.net>). We discussed the strengths and weakness of each approach.

In relation to the Wellcome's involvement, I began to push the boundary a little knowing that the Head of Special Collections would be as enabling as possible. I argued that if there was a way of setting up the Omeka software at the Wellcome, the advantage would be that the data would be very secure. We agreed that there might also be more in the way of ICT support. They confirmed there would be computer space that I could book to work with my group. The Digital Curator highlighted the major downside would be that the contributors would have to come onsite to use the software. Due to security lockdowns there would be no way of giving them remote access. We all agreed this would be very limiting - the contributors wouldn't be free to create their archive at their pace in their surroundings. It would feel like a compromise over the content being created independently on their terms. I was intuitively less in favour of considering UCL as a host. Knowing the facilities and support services at UCL very well I felt it would be extremely difficult to get the right support for running the software and that getting firm decisions and action would be painfully slow. The Digital Curator felt I should look into this option further, as UCL would not be as locked down as the Wellcome, so remote access for the

contributors might be possible. The resistance to doing so was mine and it was not an option I subsequently looked into in any great depth. I closed that door.

Using a third-party hosting service would mean having the data in the cloud, making it less secure. Its major advantage was that it would guarantee the possibility of remote use for the contributors. I would have to rely on the third party for support. It would involve paying for the hosting service and there would be issues around how long the hosting service would be required for. The Digital Curator spoke about this option as independence, but I viewed placing the archive in the hands of a third party as dependence on the unknown and uncontrollable. The trade off for me presented by this option was the enabling of remote access at the expense of being cut adrift from my host. Was it worth it? I didn't want the project to be cut adrift from my host institution. I would push a little further at the possibility of anchoring the development of the archive more firmly on the inside, but not here and now. The Wellcome is a well resourced, enabling environment. If the project could be viewed as internal, doors to possibilities that I couldn't yet foresee may present themselves. I also felt it was politically important to test the boundary. Were there spaces that might open up internally for a more joined up approach? Perhaps it just needed a key relationship to develop with the right person. We talked about whether the Wellcome had any existing software or content management approach that might be suitable as an alternative to Omeka, and it was decided that there wasn't anything.

At the suggestion of the Head of Special Collections I put together a business case for ICT, orientated around installing and running the Omeka software at the Wellcome. A meeting was arranged mid June to discuss options. There is nothing in the documentation surrounding my Collaborative Doctoral Award that suggests what I can realistically expect from my host institution, and therefore how far I could take their supportive commitment. I felt that pushing for them to support me in installing and running the software may sit beyond what would normally be asked of the host, but I had no ready markers for knowing if I was asking too much or too little. In a resource rich setting like the Wellcome, what are the possibilities? Omeka is free and open source but what I would need to use it successfully would be relatively constant ICT support throughout the project. Running and using Omeka in-house requires a degree of technical ability that I didn't have and would find challenging to develop. I wouldn't be able to do it well on my own. It would require someone within ICT to become the expert in Omeka. Asking for this was a test in the strength of the relationship I could develop with the Wellcome.

The ICT representative we met with was interested in Omeka as a community collection builder, and could see the benefits for ICT in supporting the use of this kind of software. However, there was a major issue with installing and running it at the Wellcome. The ICT representative had looked at the technical requirements for installing and running the Omeka software. It requires a Linux operating system, which the Wellcome does not use. To use it at the Wellcome would require the development of a local installation or virtual machine, the cost of which would be in the region of £4000 in addition to the costs associated with giving support in installation and ongoing use. Hosting on Omeka.net (<http://www.omeka.net>) would be significantly cheaper even if the subscription needed to be maintained long term. Given that using Omeka.net as a hosting service would work out as a much cheaper option, what were the advantages of having Omeka running internally at the Wellcome? I sensed that the ICT representative was willing to consider pushing forward on the investment if I felt strongly enough on the benefits.

The issue was that I wasn't entirely convinced on the balance of benefits. I wanted the archive to be located and developed at the Wellcome because it would secure internal commitment to the project. It would surely open more doors to closer collaboration, and more involvement from my host in the research. Therefore, politically I felt it was by far the best option. These reasons for wanting it to be developed at the Wellcome sat on top of all the standard reasons why using a third party hosting service carries undesirable risks. However, there was a major downside. The contributors would have to develop their content on Omeka onsite at the Wellcome. Three out of four of them lived a considerable distances from London. There was the additional expenses of their travel, but more than that it was the inconvenience and limitations that this would impose on them. I checked again with the ICT representative "is there no possibility for the contributors to have remote access if we developed a local installation or virtual machine?" The ICT representative carefully explained the security policy and the reasons why it would not be viable. Remote access was an immovable barrier. There was no way round it. Given all this, Omeka.net was rising up as the best solution. Not ideal for many reasons, but the best compromise. We agreed that ICT would pay the Omeka.net subscription, looking at its renewal on an annual basis.

Here I am providing a window into how and why I kept the contributors out of the frame when choosing and establishing the digital infrastructure for the construction of the archive. The tension resulting from this revolves around my exertion of control, was this control over choice a necessary pragmatic decision, a reaction to broader constraints



emanating from my uncertain positioning within my host institution? Or was I simply missing the opportunity to be participatory? In my earlier interactions with Stuart, Dolly, Peter, and Andrew, was my control over the definition of the 'archive' and the theme of 'recovery' the creation of a legitimate starting point from which a participatory approach could flourish, or a failure to operate in the spirit of participatory approaches, inviting them to establish the boundaries of the project with and alongside me?

### Troubling 'participatory' processes

These questions are much more to me than words on a page. They are the lived tensions that translate into a knot at the pit of my stomach that has gnawed in at me. The undecidable question mark that hangs over whether my actions have actually been aligned with the tenets of taking a participatory approach. Arnstein's ladder of participation looms large - have I achieved nothing more than a 'tokenistic' gesture of inclusion towards the contributors in the instigation of this participatory intervention? Argyris and Schon (1974) point to a gap that can develop between a practitioner's *espoused theory* (what they claim to be aligned to) and actual *theory in use* (what they go on to do in practice). Is this what has happened to me? Was I claiming a participatory stance, and then simply enacting a rather conventional top down process in which I was the centre of control? Pejorative statements of the failures of participatory facilitators to enact the participatory rhetoric that they claim to uphold leap out from the literature as a potentially damning indictment of my own practice:

Salient here are the differences between rhetoric, which is replete with grand sounding promises of empowerment of the marginalized, and what agencies actually do, which often takes the shape of enlisting people in pre-determined ventures and securing their compliance with pre-shaped agendas (Cornwall, 2003a, p.1326).

Participatory approaches aspire to take the notion of giving the marginalized a voice to new levels by explicitly facilitating their involvement in the *design*, implementation, and outcomes of programs (Kesby, 2005). Everywhere I turn in the PAR literature this is outlined as fundamental to the methodology (e.g. Chambers, 1994 & 1997; Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Crawley, 1998; DeKoning & Martin 1996, Baum et al, 2006). Yet in the participatory intervention that I initiated the initial design was resolutely my territory. I have three choices on how to position my actions. I can turn the attention on participatory methodology and its inherent tendency to negate, erase, and draw attention away from the

ways in which *all* interventions, including participatory ones, are always constituted and controlled by forces that constrain and limit both the facilitator's and the participants' ability to influence what is done, and I can claim that my intervention is in fact no different from *all* interventions in the sense that there is no blank canvas from which a participatory process can begin. Or I can turn the attention more resolutely onto the consequences of my control and the ways in which I could perhaps have done things differently, resisted, and pushed against constraints, and in doing so created more freedom for the participants to be more deeply involved at an earlier stage. Finally, I can turn the attention onto reflections provided by the contributors on my initial control of the process and what it meant to them. I will start by turning the gaze onto participatory methodology as others have done within participatory discourse.

### Gazing in on 'participatory' methodology

Kesby (2005) suggests that the unique contribution made by Cooke and Koothari's (2001) edited volume *Participation: The New Tyranny?* lies with the authors that develop a poststructuralist critique of participatory approaches, in order to propose that problems with participatory approaches do not result *primarily* from the use or abuse of techniques by those uncommitted to, or unable to adequately enact, the philosophy of transformatory participation. Instead the tyranny of participation is inherent in the fact that all forms of participation, even the deep and wide versions, are constituted through power relations and their dominating and constraining effects, and therefore there is no possibility for participation to create the aspired to and claimed 'innocent place' from which to begin research and practice (Lather, 1991). The implication taken forward by Kesby (2005), in his reading of Cooke & Koothari's influential volume, is that the tyranny of participation is (or certainly has been) *primarily* located in misrecognitions embedded in its *discourse*, rather than always and only in inadequate enactment.

Poststructuralist critiques of PAR (Maguire, 1987, Lather, 1991; Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995; Hagey, 1997) emanate from within 'defaced' (Hayward, 1998) formulations of power that conceptualize power not as something held by individuals as 'power over', 'power to', 'power with' and 'power within' (as in Lukes, 1974; Gaventa, 2006; and VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002), but as something that circulates in and through all social situations. Such formulations are commonly rooted in Foucauldian notions of power (1997, p.196; 1978, pp.92-102) where power is constituted not as something concentrated or as a commodity to be held, seized, divided or distributed, but as a decentered and ubiquitous force. In this

formulation power 'is not inherent within powerful subjects but dispersed throughout the complex networks of discourses, practices, and relationships that position subjects as powerful and that justify and facilitate their authority in relation to others' (Clegg, 1989, p.207). This power is not 'absent unless being exercised' (Kesby, 2005) but is constantly at work in the fabric of daily life and social interaction. The implication in working with Foucault's formulation of power is that if it is everywhere, and its permeation effects all social relations, then even emancipatory, anti-oppressive, practices inevitably and unavoidably are instigated in continuing and overlapping forces of domination (Sharp et al, 2000) that stretch out far beyond any bounded conception of where the participatory intervention begins and ends.

In these critiques, writers have begun to unravel from accounts of participatory approaches in action, the many points at which the wider networks and forces that constrain, narrow and constrict the freedom of the participants to be in control are left unacknowledged and untroubled within the praxis (Cleaver, 1999). Writers pick up on the insidious tendency in certain participatory accounts to place what is an arbitrary boundary around a given moment in which the participatory intervention begins as a means of framing that moment as an innocent, unaffected, blank canvas. Sitting beyond the immediacy of that boundary, sits the time and space that has existed before a single participant is invited into the process. Therefore, there is a complex interplay of structure and agency that has already and continuously shapes the realms of the possible. The funder, institutions and fields of practice in which the participatory intervention is situated, along with the relative position of the participatory facilitator across and within wider social frameworks, has always and already pushed in on the action, shaping the intervention and its outcomes (Eyburn and Ladbury, 1995; Cleaver and Kaare, 1995). The first half of this thesis is a tribute to that very process. To say that power and control is located only within the boundaries of the intervention itself, held by the facilitator(s) to be simplistically handed over and on at the start (Chambers, 1997) is to negate the complexity inherent in the social world. It is also a refusal to confront the myriad of ways in which all 'freedom to' is held and bounded in ongoing inter-related processes. I am very aware of the ever-increasing circles of contextual frames that are built in and around my coming together with Stuart, Peter, Andrew and Dolly all of which play a part in shaping and constraining my/our perception of the possible, flowing through the process and beyond the process from beginning to end. This is the inescapable reality that we are all bounded within. There is a sense in which I can play a legitimizing game with the boundary of the process. I can move it to the moment in which having the frame of 'mental health recovery' established, and the notion

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
of the 'archive' both conceptually and structurally sorted, the 'participatory participation' began in earnest. Or I can place the boundary further back (or remove it altogether) and instead legitimate the lack of contributor involvement in the design phase as the inevitably of external constraints pushing in. However, to do so is to negate and erase the complexity of power relations in which the intervention is located, and it is a refusal to engage and acknowledge the effects of having the vision of the archive and the frame of recovery set without contributor involvement. Furthermore, playing a legitimizing game, doesn't deal with the fact that having been immersed in participatory methodology, the lack of contributor involvement early on, troubles me deeply. It is as an indication to me that I did not get the process right, and no matter how often I step back, seek to apply a rational head, listen to the voices of my supervisors and the contributors themselves who tell me all is well- I am stuck, caught up in the notion that I should have known better, acted differently, pursued a different path. I am caught up in the dreaded possibility that I have not been participatory enough.

### The tyranny of 'participatory' discourse

Why do I do this to myself? I am just so BLOODY irritating. Why do I allow myself to go down these endless circles of self-doubt. Why aren't I investing more in just enjoying the process? It is almost like every time I relax into believing that this work is good and productive, a voice tells me not to be so uncritical. Yes, I need to listen to that voice at times but I am going WAY too far down that road. There is a point at which I should learn to just STOP and take things at face value. There are so many positives, so much about the process that is working well, being endlessly questioning and critical is preventing me from acknowledging or entering in to the joy of what we are doing. I need to get over myself. I am over-thinking it. Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit. Enough of this shit. Be HAPPY (Journal, September 2013).

Embedded in some critiques of participation, there is the suggestion that participatory discourse is in itself a form of what Foucault refers to as Governmentality; a form of power that works as a governing mechanism over the constitution of subjectivity. Reading participation in this vein, the participatory discourse becomes a mechanism of control through which the self is surveyed and kept in check. For those immersed in participation, as facilitators or participants, the rhetoric of participatory methodology governs the possibilities of behavior, reflection, representation and action (Henkel and Stirrat, 2001). This can mean being caught up in the process of 'self-policing' that the methodology itself demands through its emphasis on a rolling process of critical self-analysis (Kesby, 2005). My experience is that measuring self, against participatory rhetoric, can become a form of

oppression, and this is precisely because the rhetoric embodies ideals that necessarily fall down in various ways and to different degrees in practice. Recognition of that feeling of oppression became something of a running joke in my journal where I would regularly note comments such as 'I am experiencing the tyranny of participation again, I need to get out more'. However, my frustration was connected to wanting to find a workable balance both with the participatory rhetoric and the critical self-reflection inherent within it. I wanted to learn how to turn what I was experiencing as futile and dissatisfying self-analysis around into something that could realize its potential of being productive. In this process I have struggled to find a workable balance under participatory rhetoric's scrutinizing gaze, a balance to ensure that the scrutiny leads to helpful insights and positive change, and not to hopeless inertia or overly harsh self-criticism.

Critiques of participatory approaches emanate from two camps. The first seeks to derail participatory approaches, and declare them as profane, even damaging in masking their unavoidable non-liberatory nature. Proponents of this perspective suggest that although once marginal, participatory approaches have become a new dominating orthodoxy (Cleaver et al, 1999; Henkel and Stirrat, 2001; Hagey 1997; Nind, 2011). The other camp offers a critique while remaining resolutely pro-participation. Proponents of this perspective point out the necessity to work with an understanding that no endeavor can be undertaken outside complex power relations, suggesting instead that attention to these power relations opens up possibilities for all involved to carve out spaces of resistance within these complex networks of power. Pro-participation critical thinkers such as Cornwall & Jewkes (1995) seek to cut through some of the more dogmatic idealistic rhetoric to a more pragmatic recognition that in participatory research 'control is rarely devolved completely onto the 'community'; nor do 'communities' always want it.' Recognizing that 'while many practitioners of participatory research have come to it through ethical unease or plain frustration with the inadequacies of conventional research, participatory research is certainly not a simpler alternative' (p.1672-1673). These advocates maintain that the adoption of participatory discourse and the enactment of participatory interventions still, despite the inevitable limitations and difficulties, offers more potential for 'better' outcomes than other forms of research and practice (Kesby, 2005; Hickey and Mohan, 2004; Connelly, 2011; Cornwall, 2004). Participatory advocates point to the futility of entering too far into a disabling inertia inherent in the realization that "everything is dangerous" (Kesby, 2005). If participatory practitioners become too fearful to act in the realization that the 'unauthored' nature of power renders all 'authentic/spontaneous' participation impossible (Sharpe et al, 2000), then the outworkings

is simply disillusionment in all their attempts to bring about change. This is precisely the path I tread. Wanting to avoid disillusionment, whilst remaining critically aware, believing instinctively that the participatory and the application of its discourse is still a path worth treading:

Certainly Foucault was right to suggest that “everything is dangerous” and that even emancipatory discourses are systems of power with the capacity to dominate, but it is important to recognize that some things are more dangerous than others (Kesby, 2005, unpaginated).

### **The consequences of my constructed archival frame**

One of the criticisms leveled against participatory facilitators has been their assumption that the tools that they employ are neutral. This assumption is often rendered obvious, and subsequently troubled within critical deconstructions of participatory interventions (See Cleaver, 2001). My tool to involve the contributors was the archive, framed as the means through which they could represent themselves, and challenge the dominance of medical voices over their experiences. Far from being neutral, the tool that I created for the contributors was ‘laden’ with my ‘perspectives, values, and priorities’ (Koothari, 2001, p.57), and this directly shaped the knowledge they could produce (Mohan 2001). The archive, in common with all mechanisms for knowledge production, cannot act as a neutral vehicle to reveal subjugated knowledges or provide access to authentic voices. Instead it plays an active role in creating the voices it contains. The contributors’ knowledge and ways of knowing have been inevitably constrained within its structure and form. As my account draws out, it was my relationship with the notion of the ‘archive’, and my vision that dictated the archive’s structure and form. My choices have a set of consequences. The focus on personal narrative acts to condense the complexities of the contributors personal experience into a linear and formalized representation (Kothari 2001). The normative conventions embodied in narrative itself, coupled with the emphasis on recovery, combine to construct the boundaries around what can and can’t be said. In fact the archival focus itself can be troubled in that it is not necessarily the best way of tackling or speaking into the contributors immediate issues (White, 1996).

### **The consequences of the recovery frame**

Perhaps even more troubling to me is my influence over the choice of ‘recovery’ as an overarching frame for the archive. From my first meetings and interactions with

the contributors it was abundantly clear to me that Dolly and Peter, in particular, do not position themselves firmly within a recovery frame. Although both have written around recovery in various other contexts and, along with Andrew and Stuart, have contributed their narratives to recovery anthologies. Peter has written elsewhere... 'labels are for tin cans not people' (Carson et al, 2011, p.13). His implication being that recovery is a difficult label. At the time that I made the decision, using the frame of recovery didn't strike me as a major issue- Dolly and Peter felt they could position their truth within it as long as the archive enabled a critical and reflective perspective to emerge. Therefore, I wasn't going *against* the contributors in choosing recovery as a frame, but was I making an unnecessary assumption that a frame was even necessary? And what were the unintended consequences of my actions?

Although there is no such thing as a neutral term, label or frame (Moncrieffe and Eyben, 2007), it has felt to me that terms, labels and frames connected to mental health are particularly loaded with contested connotations, to the extent that choosing the right ones can be fraught with tension. This is drawn out by Church (1995) in relation to how the individual with lived experience is described and chooses to describe themselves. 'Patient' speaks back into the medical model of pathology and mental illness. 'Client' can be a referent indicative of a rehabilitative mindset. 'Consumer' has been forged in self-help collectives but also carries with it connotations of conservative market orientated politics. 'Service user' constricts the definition of the individual in relation to the system. 'Survivor' speaks of grass roots politics but is used differently to denote 'survival' following mental distress but more commonly to indicate 'survival' of the mental health system (Sweeney et al, 2009). All these terms are temporal and spatially located in that they emanate from particular contexts and soci-historic time frames, with definition (including self-definition) shifting over time in relation to broader societal shifts (Crossley, 2001). Recovery has a particular 'taste' and a 'socially charged life' (Bakhtin, 1986, p.293 in Church, 1995, p.10). Over the course of constructing the archive, I have become more aware of the reasons why recovery is a problematic descriptor. This is complicated by the fact that the meaning of the term has itself been further refined and reconstituted through its take up in contexts divorced from its original conception. There is no doubt that the concept of recovery stands on contested ground.

The term recovery, immediately indicates that there is something to 'recover from', and however it is conceptualized, the term cannot escape from its basic embodiment of the indication of a 'loss' or a 'problem' and a need for 'reconstitution'. There are two basic ways in which the word 'recovery' can and is taken up in relation to mental health. It can be used within a clinical framework to indicate a need to recover from symptoms (Harding et al, 1987), or in a 'social sense' (Spandler et al, 2007) to indicate the need to recover a meaningful life (Davidson et al, 2005; Secker et al, 2002). A contestation therefore emerges as to whether recovery as a concept is primarily connected into a broader biogenetic framing of mental health routed in the 'remission of symptoms', or to a conceptualization that rejects the biogenetic model but recognizes the need for individuals to regain hope and meaning following or during periods of difficulty, trauma, or distress. Definitions of recovery that have emanated from the consumer/survivor movement have tended to conceptualize recovery as a process, rather than orientating it around narrowly defined sets of outcomes. Survivor definitions have therefore tended to stress the possibility of 'recovery in' rather than 'recovery from' illness (Deegan, 1988; Davidson & Roe, 2007; Nelson et al, 2014). The distinctions between these starting points can often be hard to distinguish in definitions of recovery when the focus becomes orientated around living a meaningful life *despite* mental illness. Here the focus may not be on the eradication of symptoms but there is still an underlying subscription to a model of illness. This is encapsulated in MacManus' (2008) description of recovery as 'coping with your illness and having a meaningful life' (p.16), as well as in Anthony's influential professional conceptualization of the concept:

Recovery is described as a deeply personal, unique process of changing one's attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills and/or roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life even with the limitations caused by illness. Recovery involves the development of new meaning and purpose in life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness (Anthony, 1993).

The lack of consensus across the mental health field in relation to recovery is not only connected to differences of opinion around what people are recovering from, but also extends into differences over what the process of recovery entails, as well as what the outcomes should be (Ralph & Corrigan, 2005, Spandler et al, 2007). This lack of consensus has not prevented the uptake of the concept in mental health service provision with what Spandler et al (2007) refer to as a 'recovery approach' (p.791) being fostered in the UK, North America and New Zealand (Jacobsen &



Greenley, 2001; Turner-Crowson & Wallcraft, 2002; Nelson et al, 2014). Whereas in the early 1990s, recovery was emerging out of personal accounts of recovery journeys (Deegan, 1988), its popular take up by services has inevitably led to the translation of the concept into prescriptive tools. This is highlighted by Peter in the following terms:

I think it is wrong when we are telling people how to recover...what we need is love, compassion and guidance, we don't need tools for recovery, we don't need models for recovery...we're turning recovery into a science, it has been hijacked by the services (Peter Bullimore in Carson et al, 2011, p.167).

Knowing what I now know, having had the space to think and develop a personal perspective on mental health through my friendship with the contributors, my reading, and interactions with different audiences for the archive of mental health recovery stories, I would not (if the choice were to be mine again) apply the frame of recovery to the archive. It is simply too pejorative, too connected into notions of loss and illness. I have developed a deep unease with the concept in relation to the development of my own political perspectives, which have grown with this process. Also, I have uncomfortably witnessed the reaction to the recovery frame from some mental health survivors when speaking at places like Mental Fight Club at the Dragon Café, where members of the audience have expressed anger and hurt at the way they have been treated by services in the hands of the recovery model. I do not want to contribute to their pain by waving a flag for a process that has had a wounding effect. Asking Dolly to reflect on our use of the recovery frame she says:

When we first started it was relevant. Like anything in the world terms go in and out of fashion. The term recovery started off as a very positive thing. People who use services took it on board, and felt it would help them reclaim some power and make something of their lives, but now it has been taken over by mental health services...Yeah it says there is a possibility for recovery, but the system hasn't recovered. It is not on recovery. It's the same old system with the same old problems that were there before. It also puts all the responsibility for recovery on the person who is in distress. It has been used to control people and when we went to the Dragon Café you saw with your own eyes that people weren't happy with the term. Yet those same people, a few years before were loving it. So it's not the word, it's how that word has been used to change people's experience, and I am afraid mental health services have missed the boat. They could have done so much with it, but they haven't, they have just waved the flag from the same old boat. The name of the ship might have changed, but it's the same old boat with holes in it and too many people drown. It needs more than a name change, it needs everything to change, but it has been interesting to see this difference as we have been contributing to the archive. Nothing ever stays the same, that's what archives show don't they? (Interview, 29 July 2014).

Given my lack of a nuanced awareness at the outset, I marvel at the boldness at which I asserted the recovery frame. I didn't and couldn't know the difficulties at that point, but that is precisely the reason why I perhaps should have been far wavier about taking the decision to frame the archive into my own hands. I am reproachful of my actions at this point, and this is certainly something I want to reflect on as having ramifications as to how I approach future participatory work. In all of this, I am circling around and unable to finally reach a conclusion on the extent to which my actions and choices led to controlling but broadly *enabling* frames within which the contributors could carve out a space to push, change, influence, and direct their positioning within the project and their resulting knowledge production. Or the extent to which these frames should be troubled as *unnecessarily* limiting, and constraining, representing a missed opportunity to open up a wider, freer space. Fundamentally, I believe I may be reaching, or grappling, towards a 'truth' that to undertake participatory work (even when taking to account time, resource and contextual constraints that inevitably push in and shape what can and can't be done), there is a requirement to enact a refusal to anchor too rigidly and quickly into the security of a known and bounded space. Instead participatory work involves learning to be more comfortable with a 'pointing ahead without knowing for certain what to point at' (Halperin, 1995). A looking ahead that isn't so quick to consolidate the future, a pointing ahead that resists too straightforward a closure on what might become (Herising, 2005, p.141).

In her exploration of Palestinian archival memory, Butler (2009, p.64) draws on Said (1986) to explore the Palestinian 'right to a remembered presence' (2000, p.184). Said suggests that 'no clear and simple narrative is adequate to the complexity of our experience' and asserts that 'essentially unconventional, hybrid and fragmentary forms of expression should be used to represent us'. He concludes that a 'multifaceted vision is essential to any representation of us' (1986, p.7). Although his words are specific to the Palestinian experience, I sense the transferability to representations of mental health lived experience. Similarly, when I approach Chetzovich's (2003) work around the creation of an archive of feeling that deals with trauma in a way that resists pathologizing, I more fully recognize how the recovery frame may force the contributors into the production of a particular type of heroic narrative in which their trauma is constrained into declaring itself as resolved. I sense the missed opportunity to push deeper, to problematize further with the contributors in relation to the ways and means in which their mental health experiences might be

represented. Chetzovich (2003) says of her own work:

Refusing any quick-fix solution to trauma, such as telling the story as a mode of declaring an identity...the cases that interest me offer the unpredictable forms of politics that emerge when trauma is kept unrelentingly in view (p.16).

This leads me to trouble my actions in choosing a conventional linear narrative frame orientated around recovery that acted as a mechanism for closing the door of exploration down. By not insisting on creating a space in the early stages to collectively reflect on the defining and framing of the archive, I sense the lost potential. bell hooks' description of voice as an act of resistance leads me to further question the extent to which the use of the recovery frame can in any way be interpreted as an act of liberation. I regret not pushing further with the contributors into an exploration of creative expression that could move away and challenge existing ways of seeing and knowing:

To speak as an act of resistance is quite different from ordinary talk...it is easy for the marginal voice striving for a hearing to allow what is said to be over-determined by the needs of that majority group who appears to be listening, to be tuned in. It becomes easy to speak about what the group wants to hear, to describe and define experience in a language compatible with existing images and ways of knowing, constructed within social frameworks that reinforce domination (hooks, 1989, p.14).

Did I constrain the possibility of enabling the contributors to move towards a more complex, richer, multi-faceted vision for the representation of their mental health lived experience? Yes, is my intuitive response. I regret that I didn't let and/or enable the 'archival imagination' (Butler, 2009, p.64) of the contributors take over.

### **Joint reflections on my control**

Here I will present two extracts from reflective interviews, undertaken with Andrew and Dolly, around my initial control of the process. The extracts offer two different perspectives, which I want to let stand on their own.

#### ***Extract from Interview with Andrew 29 May 2015***

Anna: How did you feel about having recovery as the theme of the archive?

Andrew: I think recovery is a good theme. It is a valid theme. Maybe recovery is a maturing concept, and there will always be other headline ethics that guide mental health care- for example peer support, personalization, mindfulness. Those things have also had a prominence. Previous to recovery we had things like user involvement in delivery and care, partnership working, stakeholding. We had various types of ethics that drove mental health care, but maybe recovery is one of

the most powerful drivers of mental health services recently in that many services are now called recovery services, and we have recovery teams and directors of recovery. If you define recovery as having affective therapies that result in a meaningful life, and a new identity, and a new functionality, so you are able to do more things, be relied on, be a regular guy or gal then it is a good thing. Those things are important to recovery, so I think recovery is a good model to work with.

Anna: What about the backlash towards recovery? Some people feel it has been co-opted by services?

Andrew: Recovery certainly has changed. There was an article by Bill Anthony in about 1992 which is supposed to be one of the founding articles of recovery, and people like Judi Chamberlin in America were talking about empowering individuals and how they needed to get away from the nanny state, from being constantly supervised by statutory authorities, be they mental health, or people dealing with income or housing support. In the beginning recovery was there for the service user domain and it has been taken over by services, but perhaps that gives the opportunity for well-meaning service providers to deliver services in a better way, in a way that matches what they want to do. There are quite a few people working in mental health services who want to make a positive difference to people's lives and they are distraught when that doesn't happen, so it gives an opportunity for mental health service providers to do things differently, and it empowers service users to move out on their own.

Anna: I wonder if it would have been better if I didn't choose a theme to frame your narratives, if I had let the frame emerge from your narratives? What is your feeling about that? Do you think it would have been better if I had taken a more open, fluid approach?

Andrew: No, I think using the recovery theme was good. It was good to have a theme- we needed a focus. I like writing around a focus. Recovery is still relevant, books are still being written that include recovery themes. I think it is a helpful notion. It was good to have that focus on recovery and it helped all of us contributors to think around a point.

Anna: So having a frame was useful, you wouldn't have liked to have contributed with a more open door?

Andrew: Having the frame was important.

Anna: I feel I could have been more collaborative. I could have allowed you even more freedom, you know like letting you decide - What is this archive going to be? What frame do we want to sit around it? I question myself, could I have been more open and fluid? I wanted to be participatory.

Andrew: But you were very inclusive in all your dealings with me. It really felt like my story. Yes you made choices but they were enabling, I was able to use my own initiative within the frames provided, and I am very proud of what I contributed. It's good to go back over what you have composed and created, and I looked back over it before today and I am really happy with the project.

Anna: Who do you think on balance controlled the project?

Andrew: There was no overt coercive control, not a hint of that, quite clearly you were aiming to set us up as equal participants [...] Obviously you had control of the set up of the project, you chose us, you invited us, and set the parameters, but it was never coercive. Your influence was transparent and open for us to question all the way through.

Anna: You are being very kind to me, I am more critical of myself.

Andrew: Well you wouldn't expect anything else from me would you? [Laughter].

*Extract from Interview with Dolly 27 July 2014*

Anna: I think if I was doing it again I would keep it even more open at the beginning.

Dolly: Yeah.

Anna: So instead of saying I am going to choose the software, the theme, it's going to contain your personal stories of recovery, I would say- What do you think an archive is? What would you like it to look like? What shape would an archive of mental health from your perspective take? The problem with that is it could take the whole process, it could have taken a year just to figure out 'ok this is what we will create'.

Dolly: Yeah and most of us don't know what archives are, we needed to be taught that really. None of us will think the way you have approached the archives is the only way. We got a sense that there are other ways, but the control isn't necessarily negative. I learnt a lot about archives through this project. How different they can be. In fact they can be absolutely anything, that is what I learnt. You know if we wanted to perform our recovery story with dogs, that would have been great.

Anna: You could have done that!

Dolly: In the Wellcome building?

Anna: Just tell security, don't worry about all the dogs, it's fine.

Dolly: Yeah we had to be a bit more normal than we would have liked to have been [laughter].

Anna: If you are completely open it is very vague as well. If you can't even say to people we are going to create an archive, as soon as you say that word you are directing it, but how can you express it otherwise? I invite you to a blank canvas. It's that balance. I don't think I got it completely right.

Dolly: Well however you had approached it you wouldn't be happy with it. If you said we are going to make a mental health archive with no more suggestion than that. We would still be doing it now. We wouldn't agree. It would have taken much much longer (pause) But then again it does make you wonder, how much hasn't been said in previous archives because there wasn't the time to do it.

Anna: Yeah, do you think...I know you can't really answer this question because we didn't do it, but do you think you would have got frustrated, like if we had of kept it very very open, or would you have liked that?

Dolly: I would have liked it. It would have taken longer for us to come up with things but I would have liked it, yeah, to have more say over what the archive could have looked like, what it should contain, or even a bit of it, like what is mental health? It could have been wider and narrower at the same time.

### Refusing closure

I cannot offer the reader a final and definitive point of closure on the questions I have opened up around the extent to which my initial control should be perceived on balance as enabling or limiting, oppressive or productive. Neither can I offer a final word on the extent to which my actions fall under the banner of 'participatory practice' or fall too short of its ideals. There are many ways to read it, many nuances tied up in it. Are some aspects of my control more legitimate than other aspects? Is my control of the archive's infrastructure, less problematic than my control of the theme of recovery? I can pose the questions but I can't close them down to give a definitive response. I can only convey to the reader that raising these questions and troubling my actions is part of the ethical imperative I am seeking to embrace in being participatory. Here I seek to convey my growing understanding that within this ethical imperative, these questions are best left open to contestation.

## Part 2

### A collaborative move?

By October 2012, Dolly, Stuart, and Andrew were set up as contributors on the Omeka site working relatively autonomously on the production of their personal narratives, meeting with me monthly in London to keep in touch. With Peter, our agreed way of working (with me interviewing him and then choosing extracts to upload onto Omeka) didn't start until February 2013. From October 2012, as the actual work to build the Omeka site got underway, I was struggling to get a sense of the changing dynamic underpinning the process. Dolly, Stuart and Andrew were in control of the creation of their narrative within the constraints offered by the choice of theme, and infrastructure for the archive. My role in supporting them became focused on giving technical support and acting as a sounding board in discussing ideas and ways to approach structuring their narrative. As independent users on Omeka, they could log in from home, adding and editing content on their own terms. They were controllers in terms of their individual contribution. Yet during this time of construction, my awareness and discomfort at my centrality in the participatory process fills my journal. I had a growing realization that despite enabling the contributors to have autonomous control of the construction of their pages in Omeka, I was still the central figure in the process, and the balance of power resided firmly with me. I represented this visually for myself in my journal, reconstructed as figure 7.1.



**Figure 7.1: Critical Reflections on my Centrality**

It was the one-to-one relational structure underpinning the process that was keeping me in the centre. We were working in a way that closed down any potential for interaction between the contributors, and shut off the possibility of interaction between the contributors and staff within Special Collections, forcing everything to flow through me. Stretching out ahead of the archive were further strategic decisions that needed to be made in relation to whether the archive would expand, and how it should be launched. I desperately wanted these decisions to be shared. I was disturbed by the realization of the extent to which I had embedded myself at the centre of the process, and as a result I became focused on finding a way to introduce a collective element into the process. I contacted each of the contributors to ascertain whether they would be happy in a shift in approach where I continued to work on a one-to-one basis with each of them to produce their personal narrative in Omeka, but where we also established a collective way of working where we would meet to discuss the overarching purpose, aims, and objectives embedded in the archive in order to establish collective decisions on strategic ways forward. This felt like a pivotal moment in the research process. All four contributors agreed to be involved collectively and strategically. At this stage, I also sought active participation from the Special Collections team who agreed to send a representative to any meetings we



arranged. This was done in the hope that relational interaction might lead to a deeper embedding of the project within the host institution. My journaling transitions from anxiety to relief, and I clearly felt that this structural shift would be the beginnings of the process feeling 'properly participatory':

Fostering a collective element feels absolutely right, and should alter the degree to which I am at the centre making all the decisions. It feels like there is a lot of potential in this move towards collectivity. It's an opening to new possibilities. It would be great if the contributors begin to take the process in a direction that I cannot foresee as yet, so it becomes 'their' archive in a more embedded way. There is real potential that I will be able to take a step back, and let things run away from me to a greater degree than has been the case so far (Journal, January 2013).

I suggested that we would meet for an initial workshop on 5 February 2013 where we would think about the strategic purpose sitting behind the creation of the mental health recovery archive and potential ways forward. In preparing for the workshop, I assumed the role of facilitator and in my journal there are echoes of what was becoming a familiar uncomfortable tension around assuming the lead and letting go of control. I intuitively felt that my momentum, my drive, my desire to push things forward was necessary to initiate us working as a collectivity, but in using that drive I was once again shaping and defining the process, and defining the boundaries around what was possible. The agenda that I sent out for our first workshop (Appendix C) has my footprint bound up in it. I wanted us to begin to define a shared vision for the archive, and to collectively discuss whom we envisioned as our audience, and what we wanted the archive to achieve. I gave examples on the agenda of possible ways of framing our purpose as a means of stimulating debate, but in so doing I inevitably tied what it was possible for us to see and discuss around my own situated viewpoint. I felt lost in the same cycle of haunting critical reflection around whether my role was enabling or constraining. I had internalized the participatory literature that warns of the dangers inherent in participatory practice that masks continued centralization in the name of decentralization (Biggs and Smith 1998; Mosse 1994; Stirrat 1997) and it troubled my perception of my actions. I knew I was still at the centre but I was waiting to see whether the workshops would begin to break down that centrality, whether I would sense a growing momentum from the others, a desire to assume control that would enable me to let go. Would the project begin to climb up Arnstein's ladder of participation? The dynamics that shaped the process are buried into the intricacy of the conversations we had at the workshops, and here I will use an extract from my recording of the first workshop (5 February 2013) as a means of surfacing the complex entanglements of

power, control and agency that constituted the possible. The discussion we are having at this point is around representation and whether we wanted to expand the archive, opening it out to include a wider selection of people and stories:

Anna: So I guess one of the key decisions we have to make is whether we want to stop at creating your narratives or whether we want to expand outwards and, if we do want to do that, how that could be done given the resources we have available to us.

[long pause]

Stuart: It's about what you want and need for your PhD. What do you need to happen?

Anna: Yes, you are right there is this academic frame sitting around my involvement in the archive but there is potential to push beyond that and for me to still get what I need out of this. The whole idea embedded in my PhD is to explore participatory approaches to building an archive, so I guess in a way I will be able to write about it whatever direction the archive moves in. So it is about what you all think. Can we collectively reach a consensus on where we see the archive heading? [long pause] I think what I am trying to suggest is our roles don't necessarily need to be fixed. I am obviously leading at the moment and I am a bit uncomfortable with how much control I have. I think the dynamic could change and you could, or we could more collectively begin to take this forward, define what we do and don't do.

[long pause]

Anna: Perhaps if we think about this question of representation in the archive, are we happy to keep the archive as it is, with your four stories, or do we want to expand it, and sitting behind that is the broader question of what are we trying to achieve?

Andrew: I would like to see the archive reaching out to young people with mental health difficulties, there isn't enough being done for young people, and I think we could try to use the archive to speak to young people.

Dolly: I think the problem with that is that none of us are young. If we wanted to do that we would have to start all over again. Get young people involved from the start, It would be a completely different project. No offense to anyone else here but they are not going to be interested in our stories! [laughter].

Peter: Yes, that's true. We are all too old!

Stuart: I think if we want the archive to be more representative than we would have to get more people involved. Our four stories don't represent black and ethnic issues relating to mental health and they are a very under-represented group fighting for recognition.

[pause]

Anna: I think we are getting to the heart of what we need to discuss which is this question of 'representativeness'. Is that what we are trying to do with the archive? Are we trying to be 'representative' of some kind of cross section?

Dolly: How do you define the cross section though, there will always be something missing.

Anna: Yes it is an unsolvable one, you always have to draw the line somewhere, complete representation isn't possible.

Stuart: So it is about what statement we want to make with who we include, and I think we have to think about minority groups.

Peter: We have to think about what is achievable, are we talking about inviting just one or two more people, or a much larger expansion?

Anna: That is a very important point Peter, because if we wanted to invite a lot more people in then it can't just be dependent on me forming close one-to-one relationships with participants. We would have to change the model, perhaps have you all involved not just as contributors of your own stories but doing the facilitating job that I have been doing, working alongside people [pause]. I mean perhaps I am getting ahead of myself, perhaps the close working relationship could be dropped in place of a more open call for participation but that would change the archive dramatically and we have to think about why we would want to do that, going back to the question of what we are trying to achieve with the archive.

Peter: I am really behind this project, I think it is really important, but being completely honest and realistic I couldn't commit to do what you have been doing Anna.

Anna: What about everyone else? This is a difficult one, I don't want any of you to feel any pressure that I am asking you to take on a workload that would be too much, you have already contributed so much, so I want to make it clear that there is absolutely no pressure being applied here, but at the same time I don't want to make assumptions about your involvement and our roles in the project. If you wanted to take on a facilitating role I think that would be fantastic.

Dolly: I would love to say yes, I'll take that on but I wouldn't want to make a promise that I can't keep.

Stuart: I think I agree with Dolly. I am happy with my current contribution [pause].

Anna: Yes that is absolutely fine. Andrew, are you in agreement, that we keep your level and type of contribution to the project as it stands?

Andrew: Yes I think so. I am very happy with the way things are going, the work I have done so far on my section and I want to continue with that.

Anna: That is absolutely fine, and it's good to talk these things through with you all. What about putting an open call on the archive for others to contribute?

Peter: That would still need managing.

Anna: Yes, but it would be less demanding for me [pause], but I still don't think we are getting to grips with the fundamental question of what we want to achieve with

the archive, as what we do needs to flow from a clearer idea of what our purpose is.

Dolly: Well for me it comes back to what we talked about when we first met about archives and history, and how I can't complain that the voice of survivors and service users aren't in the archive if I don't speak.  
[pause]

Anna: So that ties in with something I have been mulling over that the purpose of the archive is about raising questions of representation rather than making an attempt to be representative.

Dolly: Yeah.

Anna: What about you Stuart, what motivated you to be involved, what do you see as the purpose behind the archive?

Stuart: Well there was a variety of reasons but I saw the archive as an opportunity to speak into stigma around mental health, and talk back to psychiatry. I want to show psychiatry that people like me, we are our best Doctor.

Dolly: Yeah that too! [laughter].

Anna: Peter, Andrew?

[Joint yes from Peter and Andrew].

Stuart: I also want to give hope and promote recovery.  
[pause]

Anna: So rather than thinking about expanding the archive, perhaps our efforts would be better placed in thinking about how we can make an impact with your stories, perhaps by thinking about who we want to speak back to, and how we raise awareness of the archive with the key audiences we want to get our message across to.

Enthusiastic agreement.

Anna: Is that really what you all think? I don't want to force my interpretation of where our discussion is heading on you. Am I reading this right? That in thinking of the way forward, we are collectively saying that time is better spent finishing the archive as it stands and then finding a way to make an impact on the audiences we want to speak to, rather than expanding the archive? [pause] I think given my capacity, I think I couldn't realistically manage both aspects and work on my PhD.

Peter: In an ideal world we would include more people, we would make it bigger, more representative and we would work to raise awareness of it, and make as bigger impact as we can but reality kicks in and we have to be realistic. Given our capacity, and our other commitments, we have to make a choice and I think we should stick with finishing the archive as it stands and then work on letting people know about it once the archive is finished. Speaking back to psychiatry as Stuart says [pause].

There is never a singular voice of solidarity or harmonious consensus around a project but a complex interplay in which positions, decisions and outcomes are negotiated. Power is never held in once place to be given over, or passed on, it *circulates* (Foucault, 1980). In the intricacy of this conversation it is impossible to unravel the complexity of this circulation. It is impossible to fully grasp and understand the implications of when each of us chooses to speak, and choose to remain silent as we negotiate and accommodate, and collectively decide on a course of action. Who is in control of this conversation? Has anyone been forced into silence? How do we influence each other? In what ways is our 'agency' enabled or constrained? The complexity of these 'truths' can never be resolved, unraveled, fully known. The dynamics of freedom and constraint circulating in the process remain buried in interactions like this one; what shapes the boundaries of constraint lies both in the moment, in the complexity of interaction between 'actors'; and it stretches out beyond the moment and the interactional space into the infinite context of the social fabric of our lives and the ways in which our multiple positions and roles motivate and shape us. These complex entanglements of conscious and unconscious influences are never fully knowable, never fully graspable. Given this complexity, what I offer here will always and only be impoverished observations from my situated position, from within what I can be conscious of, from within what I can see and know.

In this interaction, there is a text around the question of 'representativeness'. Should we not include young people (Andrew) or minority groups (Stuart)? At the heart of this contestation is an awareness of the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion sitting around the archive, and the hopeless inadequacy of privileging four stories in the face of others. It is the alterity of others that stretches on and on, carrying in it the impossibility of ever being 'representative enough'. For Stuart this means picking who to privilege, and choosing to privilege those who have to fight hardest for recognition. The 'truth' of privilege bound up in all attempts at being 'representative' means we are left with trying to negotiate over the boundary between inclusion and exclusion; reconciling ourselves to the fact that there will 'always be something missing' (Dolly). I interject, changing the trajectory of the discussion, suggesting that perhaps the question of where to place the boundary is unnecessarily constrained by the relational model underpinning the archive, the close intimate relationship on which the archive has been constructed carries its own limitation, a limit of capacity, how many more intimate relationships could be sustained if the responsibility for forming them lies only on my shoulders? This moment was vital to me, I needed to see whether my centrality as the relational lynch pin around which the project revolved could

be shifted. I envisaged the possibility that the contributors might become central facilitators themselves around which new spokes of relationships could be built and the 'representation' in the archive could expand. I silenced the trajectory Andrew and Stuart had been taking the group on, but with it I opened up a new structural possibility and with it a new space for the contributors to negotiate and exercise agency in. This moment symbolizes the relational aspect of coming together in a participatory process in which 'solidarity and conflict' are held in tension alongside 'a dynamically shifting alliance'. The structure in which possibilities for action are constituted is never fixed but is made and re-made in every moment (Cleaver, 1999, p.604). Led by Peter, the contributors exerted their right to say 'no' to taking on the role of relationship builder and facilitator. I remained throughout the process as the main driving force behind the project, at its relational heart, and the representational limits placed on the archive were kept in place. The contributors exercised their right *not to participate* according to my proposed vision. They had weighed up the costs and benefits of participating on those terms relative to their capacity to give, and perceived it as beyond the realms of what they could or would offer. They accepted and endorsed my centrality. In disentangling this, I sense the recursion, that if I hadn't been so quick to visualize what 'deeper participation' and 'letting go of control' would look like and what it would involve, then the outcome may have been different, but in sensing that, I come back to the deeper recursion that as an active participant, exerting influence is unavoidable. As part of the participatory process I will always and only be able to negotiate and act from within the realms of what it is possible for me to see, know and visualize. In embracing the complexity of collaboration I want to shake off the simplistic dichotomies in participatory rhetoric that see empowerment and subordination as always necessarily diametrically opposed (Jackson 1998 p.53). I want to get past the sense that a process that does not climb up Arnstein's ladder is necessarily always a failure (Cleaver, 2001). I want to recognize the complexity of the interplay between structure and agency, power and control. I want to find a way to think, act, and reflect that recognizes the limitations in the ideals that I subscribe to without losing faith in the value of critically reflecting on what could be better, and 'more' and not 'less' enabling, inclusive, and emancipatory. Perhaps, in seeking to act in the midst of this complexity, the means to move forward can only come from the continual 'provocation' to think, examine, and question the action in a way that remains open to contestation and challenge. The difficulty is learning to live with the discomfort that such a position necessarily entails (Hardiman, 2009, p.37).

## Chapter 8: Negotiating Roles and Relationships

This chapter begins with Herising's notion of 'interrupting positions' (2005) to explore what it has meant to me to assume the role of 'collaborator' within the construction of the mental health recovery archive. My aim here is to try to begin to unearth the complex subjective negotiations that occur when seeking to embody the participatory rhetoric of working *with* and *not* on participants.

Within the notion of 'Interrupting Positions', Herising (2005) is concerned with the critical relational questions that face researchers seeking to work alongside marginal communities. He goes beyond simplistic formulations of inside-outside relational locations, to try to reveal the complexity involved in the constitution of relational spaces in which collaborative work is conducted across substantive divides. Sensitive to the different, multiple and dynamic situated positions in which our subjectivities are constituted, Herising uses the motifs of 'thresholds' and 'passageways' to suggest the movements in subjectivity that occur in the coming together within collaborative endeavors. Herising (2005) seeks to explore the relational negotiations that occur within this type of work asking, in relation to the commitment to come together with others, 'what aspects of our beliefs, values, identities, and knowledges do we need to disinherit, disavow, decentre, disrupt, claim, reinsert or centre' (p.131) in order to work together in participatory spaces? He also seeks to trouble in what ways the 'finding' of these relational passageways leads to the development of a substantially different playing field than that occupied by imperialist/colonizing projects. He seeks to unravel the stubborn places of privilege that continue to bear an influence within these collaboratively constituted relations (p.132). Kinpaisby's (2008) writing around participation resonates here, as she also draws attention to the pertinent and challenging 'boundary crossings' that need to be made by participatory facilitators in different and complex ways as they attempt to pursue this type of work. Kinpaisby's (2008) writing seeks to surface how these 'boundary crossings' often occur at the nexus of 'academia and community', 'practice and theory', 'work and life', 'political claims and professional practice' (p.292). I want to use Herising's central notion of the need to disinherit, disavow, decentre, disrupt, claim, reinsert or centre different aspects of our subjectivity in collaborative relationships. To do this I make a conceptual link between societal roles and the subjective self, before beginning to explore the social roles that I carry with me. In doing this, I am seeking to tease out the extent to which these roles have

been troubled and/or transformed in the constitution of self as 'collaborative researcher'. In doing this I hope to portray the difficulty and tension that I associate with my efforts to develop collaborative relationships, as well as the simultaneous pleasures and joys of relating with Dolly, Andrew, Peter and Stuart. I end by drawing out the value inherent in our mode of relating and the growing strength of our relationship, as well as the responsibility, commitment and to some extent obligation that our mode of relating requires.

### **Roles and Subjectivity**

It is necessary to start with a clarification on how I am constructing the relationship between 'role' and 'subjectivity'. Here, I am drawing on Berger and Luckmann (1967) and Foucault (in Kelly, 2013). Berger and Luckmann (1967) centralize the concept of roles in their exploration of social constructivism by suggesting that societal 'institutions' are embodied in individual experience by means of roles, and the typification of these roles is a 'necessary correlate of the institutionalization of conduct' (p.96). Berger and Luckmann suggest that it is through, and in, the playing of roles that an individual participates in the social world, and that society's institutions are embodied in individual experience by means of roles. Roles are objectified linguistically, and by internalizing these objectivities, the social world becomes subjectively real to the individual. Berger and Luckmann point towards society's 'common stock of knowledge' where standards of role performance are accessible to all members of a society, or at least to members who are potential performers of the role. These standards act to verify the credentials of all performers and, by the same token, they serve as controls. Berger and Luckmann's (1967) point is that as soon as actors are typified as role performers, their conduct is necessarily susceptible to enforcement (p.91-93). Thus, in Berger and Luckmann's theory of reality, both the individual and the social world are constituted in and through the enactment of roles. To enact any given role, the individual internalizes the societal norms and expectations associated with the given role. In this way, roles are part of a process of societal regulation and control of behavior, and it is in the internalization of these roles that an individual's subjectivity is formed.

The notion that social practices and roles are fundamental to the formation of 'subjectivity' can also be traced in Foucault's work. At first glance, this statement might seem incongruous in light of the fact that several Foucauldian commentators have argued that Foucault takes a resolutely 'anti-subjectivist' stance across his body of work (see Mansfield, 2000). The view of Foucault as 'anti-subjectivist' has been argued against by



other Foucauldian commentators such as Kelly (2013), and it is his arguments that I am introducing here. To take *my* argument forward it is not necessary for me to explore (as Kelly has) the philosophical concept of 'subjectivity' in its relation to consciousness as introduced to modern philosophy by Kant and Descartes. It is also unnecessary for me to position Foucault's work on subjectivity (developed more fully in the 1980s through his lectures on the self) in relation to Kant's and Descartes' philosophical concepts. Instead here I simply want to introduce how Foucault places subjectivity in relation to social roles.

For Foucault, the subject constitutes itself at different times through the use of varied practices. Thus, individual subjectivity is 'historically constituted and is not invariant and transcendent' (Kelly, 2013, p.514). The individual subject is self-constituted using the techniques available to it in its historical moment. For Foucault then, 'what we take ourselves to be, effects who we are' and what we take ourselves to be is dependent on our 'concrete practices' (Kelly, 2013, p.515):

You do not have the same type of relationship to yourself when you constitute yourself as a political subject who goes to vote or speaks at a meeting and when you are seeking to fulfill your desires in a sexual relationship. Undoubtedly there are relationships and interferences between these different forms of the subject; but we are not dealing with the same type of subject. In each case, one plays, one establishes a different type of relationship to oneself. (Foucault, 1997, p.290 in Kelly, 2013 p.514).

For Foucault then, subjectivity is self-constituted in and through social roles and practices, and in taking on different roles, we take on and enact a variety of different subject positions. However, contrary to the tone of the quotation given above, subjectivity cannot simply be 'put on or removed like clothing' (Kelly, 2013, p.515). In taking on a new role we constitute ourselves in a different way, but this constitution occurs through practices which become habitual. Thus, even though subjectivity is relative to practices, since practices are themselves repeated habitually over time, there is relative continuity in our subjectivities (Kelly, 2013, p.515). Crucially Foucault suggests that in enacting these roles and practices the subject passes through techniques, in fact entire technologies of the self that can be 'found in all cultures in different forms' (Foucault, 1997 p.277 in Kelly, 2013, p.517). Importantly the techniques and technologies are 'not something invented by the individual himself. They are models that he finds in his culture that are proposed, suggested, and imposed upon him by his society, and his social group (Foucault, 1997, p.291 in Kelly, 2013, p.517). Roles operate within what Foucault refers to as 'Disciplinary power', operating at the intersection between techniques of domination and techniques of the self

(Burchell, 1993). By drawing on Foucault's definition of 'Governance' it is possible to imply that roles can be seen as:

A contact point where techniques of domination – or power –and techniques of the self interact, where technologies of domination of individuals over one another have recourse to processes by which the individual acts upon himself and conversely,...where techniques of the self are integrated into structures of coercion (Foucault, 1980, quoted in Fournier, 1999, p.283).

I am taking forward the suggestion that the social roles I have played, and continue to play in life, are central to my subjectivity. I am suggesting that my behavior in these roles is constituted in the social world in which I interact. I am also suggesting that my subjectivity is therefore formed at the intersection of techniques of domination and techniques of the self. I want to move on from these theoretical foundations to examine two roles that are embodied within me: 'professional archivist' and 'academic researcher'. These were roles that I was bringing to the table, and perhaps seeking to trouble and/or transform in my attempts to re-orientate myself as a 'collaborative researcher'. I want to explore the extent to which these roles in their normative and legitimized forms, clash and collide with my aspired role of 'collaborative researcher'. I want to unravel the extent to which I was able to resolve the resulting tensions and turn Foucault's 'techniques of the self' around by thinking and acting within and against my learned, engrained behaviors.

### **I am a Professional Archivist**

I am a Professional Archivist. This role has played a major part in my life. Having gained my Masters in Archives & Records Management in 2001, a seven-year period has been tied up with enacting that role as manager of Peterborough Archives Service. My return to academia to begin my PhD was a transition away from that role, but I carry it with me. I have continued to claim it as mine, and enact within it, particularly in the last year when I have been lecturing students on the MA in Archives & Records Management, the professional qualification through which the students will be able to claim the same identity as their own. The claim inherent within my professional status as an archivist is a claim to expertise over the archive. As almost all sociologists writing about 'the professions' surface, a claim to expertise through specialist, esoteric knowledge is at the heart of professional status, and is the basis on which cultural, economic and symbolic capital can be gained (Parsons, 1954 and 1968; Perkin, 1989; Freidson, 1986 and 1994; Abbott,

1998; Evetts, 2003). The professional claim to expertise about the archive, is a claim made at the exclusion of others, as drawn out in the Wellcome interviews provided in Chapter 5- the 'uneducated' others, who don't know what archives are and how they are best maintained. This claim can be legitimized in various ways, as being in others' best interests. The archivist, in using their expertise, holds organizations and businesses to account in front of society, and protects the individual from data uses and abuses. The altruism of our actions as knowledge guardians has been well played out in our literature and discourse. In the construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories I couldn't seem to let go of my claim to expertise and right to control the archive. This has been explored in Chapter 6 so what I want to do here is try to bring together, and in some senses work through a dissonance that I am experiencing between knowledge of myself as 'professional archivist' exerting 'control over' through a claim to expertise over the archive, and the role of the 'medical professional' within the psy-disciplines whose control over the mind (and associated discourse) has been the 'wrong' that the archive has been constructed to challenge and speak in to. I am forcing myself to face the awkward question: to what extent is that version and enactment of professional control any worse than my own?

Several sociologists have sought to unravel the relationship between Foucauldian concepts such as 'Governance' 'and the 'Disciplines' and the role of professions and professionals in society (Fournier, 1999; Brante, 2010; Goldstein, 1984). The notion of the 'Disciplines' is intricate and multilayered and is carried through and developed in different ways across Foucault's body of work. It emerges from Foucault's particular approach to exploring ideas about knowledge production in which he seeks to resolve the question of 'truth'- 'of how it gets told, acknowledged as such, circulated upon, ossified and transformed (Roberts, 2005, p.36). It also emerges in his writing around the question of subjectivity - of 'how human beings are made subjects' (Foucault, 1982, p.208). Foucault's approach is anchored in de-familiarizing 'supposedly natural objects' by unearthing 'the timebound and "rare" practices which made them into objects; and to explain these practices, not by reference to a single historical motor, but starting from all the neighbouring practices in which they are anchored' (Goldstein, 1984, p.173). Foucault's focus is on the *constitution* of an object, and this focus on constitution disrupts the view that there can be any such thing as natural or permanent objects whose existence and capability of being spoken of can be taken for granted. Rather, objects are formed at certain historical moments in response to particular historical conditions that enable a historical break in discourse and practice. These newly constituted objects (and their

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
associated discourse and practice) then persist through certain periods of time (Goldstein, 1984, p.172) 'under the positive conditions of a complex group of relations' (Foucault, 1982, p.209). In *Madness & Civilisation* (1989) 'the 'insane' became a constituted object through two-inter-related conditions. The first condition is the making and marking of a discursive distinction between rationality and irrationality in the social sphere translated into normality and deviance ('unreason'). The second condition is the constitution of an object for systematic observation. This condition has been fulfilled by the construction of mental asylums. As discussed by Brante:

In a typically Foucauldian manner, the starting point for the "discovery of madness" is provided with a specific date: 1656, the year of the establishment of *Hopital General* in Paris, the beginning of "the great confinement." In a short period of time, about one per cent of the inhabitants of Paris were locked up. Beggars, gamblers, blasphemers, alcoholics, vagabonds, the sexually promiscuous, the deluded and demented were interned. Subsequently – over more than a century – the insane were identified and treated as a specific category. The internment and separation of the insane implied that madness became observable in a new way. It became possible to build a systematic discourse, a science, on this new object of observation' (2010, p.847).

The psychiatric discipline emerged as a culmination of the discourse, methods and practice that was formed around this newly constituted object, 'the insane', making possible the 'meticulous control of the operations of the body' through the 'placement of persons' in observable, 'enclosed, partitioned, spaces' (Goldstein, 1984, p.175). An examination of psychiatry can be found across Foucault's body of work, but here I will concentrate on drawing out insights from his series of lectures on 'Psychiatric Power' (Foucault, 2006). In these lectures, Foucault locates psychiatric power in the nineteenth century but suggests (through reference to case studies more recent in date) that 'psychiatric power' is still the 'base-line of the encounter today between the psychiatrist and the patient' (Philo, 2007, p.151). Foucault's lectures vividly illustrate that the basis, or the fundamental underlying reason, as to why 'Psychiatric power' is necessary is that it maintains the hierarchical and unequal relationship between the psychiatrist and his patient. This is noted by Philo (2007) who suggests that in Foucault's lectures:

The psychiatrist comes to exercise power over his (always 'his') patients...where the fundamentally unequal contexts and contours of the struggle involved almost always end up favouring the former over the latter' (p.151).

This point may seem obvious that 'Psychiatric power' is needed to maintain the inequality inherent in the psychiatrist-patient relationship, but in emphasizing the inequality of the

*relationship*, Philo (2007) suggests that Foucault is in fact re-conceptualizing the focal point for the existence of 'Psychiatric power':

This relation is what is fundamental, what has to be grasped, not the asylum *per se*: and here Foucault distances himself to some extent from the focus of the asylum in *The History of Madness*, but also from those anti-psychiatrists who see the main problem in the treatment of madness as the institution (the big blocky institutional form of the asylum or the mental hospital). While in practice deriving considerable inspiration from the anti-psychiatrists – with whom he had not been familiar when writing the *History of Madness* – he nonetheless feels that their analysis is compromised by focusing on the asylum, as itself what seemingly produces abusive relations between authorities and patients, rather than on what is *really* at the heart of matters: namely, *the deeply unequal relation between psychiatrist and patient* [emphasis added], played out in countless psychiatric scenes within and beyond the asylum walls (p.151-152).

As Philo (2007) elucidates, Foucault's presentation of his argument suggests that the legitimacy granted to the psychiatrist from society to uphold and maintain this unequal relation is not primarily sanctioned through societal recognition of the psychiatrist's superior esoteric knowledge; rather legitimacy is granted by society '*from* the effects of psychiatric power (the disciplinary power achieved by the successful physician over the population). The question of the extent to which the patient grants legitimacy to the psychiatrist for their state of dependence is far more complex in Foucault's account (p.157). One form of control Foucault directly draws out is that unlike predecessors from earlier centuries who would either 'ignore or indulge the patient's "ramblings"' (p.158), the psychiatrist from the nineteenth century onwards adopts a strategy of confrontation in relation to patients delusions, seeking to interrupt the patient's own version of reality, with the 'actual' realities as known by the outside world. Removed from the real world precisely because of a failure to adequately respond to the real world, the patient is trained to renounce aspects of their madness so as to persuade their keepers to continue to meet their basic physical needs. In this way, the patients are regulated into accepting their official identity as prescribed by the psychiatrist. Rather than speaking their own truth, their own reality, they are cajoled into "first person recognition of [themselves] in a particular administrative and medical reality" (Foucault, 2006, p.161) as constituted by the disciplinary power of the psychiatrist/asylum. Foucault calls this the 'game of reality' wherein psychiatric power acts as a 'sort of intensifier of reality to madness' (Foucault, 2006, p.143). In this game, the patient's truths are subjugated by the psychiatrist's truths, but as Philo suggests "the crucial point made by Foucault is that the psychiatrist has no *truths*, he is no possessor of 'true' medical knowledge about madness as illness. In fact his only real truth is that he has worked out a few tactics for cajoling mad people into acting

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy not-mad' (p.157). In various ways, Foucault explains how what he refers to as the 'proto-psychiatrists' smoothed out this tension by utilizing symbols of medical authority like the 'clinic' as the 'staged presentation of the patient in which questioning the patient serves the purpose of instructing students' (Foucault, 2006, p.185). This was done in order to persuade society and themselves that their authority was in fact founded on their specialist knowledge rather than as Philo suggest 'merely an ability to discern the most effective tactics for quieting the disturbances of each individual patient' (Philo, 2007, p.159).

It would be possible to take this trajectory forward using Foucault and other work around madness to paint a picture of the ways in which, over the centuries, the 'insane' have been manipulated, held, constrained, and oppressed within coercive systems of control that are legitimated, at least in part, in and through professional power. What I present here is a means of hinting at the cruelty embedded in these acts, these claims to expertise and control. The limited extent to which I have space to draw on Foucault's work is enough to illustrate the tension in the central question I am struggling to articulate: to what extent am I acting differently through and in my own claims to expertise? Is there an equal degree of cruelty, an obscured violence in my exertion of professional control over the archive, not obvious of course, but insidious? This is the extreme, that I am fighting to confront/not confront. The 'truth' that I am struggling to unearth and articulate here is connected to my realization of the artificiality (and in some senses weakness) of the constructed binaries that we act on- what we cast as 'good' to be upheld, and what we cast as 'bad' to be resisted. The archive is caught up in the articulation of a binary distinction between the 'good' of enabling the voice of those with lived experience of mental health to flourish in an archival space, and the 'bad' associated with its subjugation in the archives under the dominant voice of the mental health professional. Bound up in this is an articulation of the 'bad' inherent in 'professional power' and the 'good' in fostering more equal, less exploitative relationships. Yet those binaries collide with force in my own subjectivity, and under them I become a living contradiction. I have to confront the lived contradictions that rise up in the desire within *me* to be both 'professional' and 'collaborative'. To maintain a position in both camps is to force a collision between incompatible starting points. The 'professional' part of me is dependent on maintaining a hierarchical one up relation, an exertion of my control and expertise, and the 'collaborative' insists on attempting to level the playing field.

*Extract from interview with Dolly Sen 29 July 2014*

Anna: Do you think of me as a professional?

Dolly: Yes most definitely. Yes at the time [at the beginning of the project] I saw you *only* [emphasis added] as a professional. Not professional in the bad sense of the term because in mental health the term professional is quite a loaded term. But professional in the sense that you knew your job, you knew about archives, and you knew what you were doing.

### I am an academic researcher

My role as an academic was re-convened when I started my PhD. Its trajectory can be followed back to my studying for the MA in Archives and Records Management which was followed by a two year role as a Research Assistant in the same department at UCL. The problems that I have associated with negotiating 'professionalism', in its claim to assert an authoritative position from which to speak through and in a superior status, that arises through the development of specialist skills formed through immersion in (and contribution to) a legitimized body of knowledge, is equally applicable to problems bound up in enacting an academic role in a way that is compatible with the principles of collaborative research. It is the same problem. It is the same contradiction. What can I bring to bear by approaching it from an academic direction?

Relevant to my negotiation of my role in relation to the construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories is Cresswell and Spandler's (2013) and Church's (1995, 1997) exploration of the tension that occurs for non-survivor academics who seek to enter into a research relationship with psychiatric survivors. These tensions arise particularly when the academic seeks to approach research from an objective, distanced position (Church, 1995, p.146). In an exploration of academic research on social movements, Cresswell and Spandler (2013) surface the pitfalls that occur when academics treat these movements as 'objects' of research 'to be observed, described and explained' rather than as 'active processes that people experience' (p.141). They argue that this limits the academic's knowledge production and theoretical work to formulating abstract generic propositions that marginalize the position of the movement's own actors. Activists operating from within the movement are equally involved in knowledge production but their knowledge is founded *in* their activism in response to two imperative questions: *What side are you on?* And *what is to be done?* When an academic chooses to 'sit on the fence' or operate from above without any engagement *in* or *with*, then the researcher is placed at cross purposes

to the central imperatives of social movement activism: *which side are you on? What is to be done? And how can we win?* The question then is whether it can ever be perceived as legitimate for an academic to evade placing themselves in relation to the central political imperatives embedded in what they are seeking to research. Is it ever legitimate not to turn the question around auto-reflexively and engage in unraveling, exploring, and therefore generating knowledge from the same question: *which side am I on?* Cresswell and Spandler (2013) suggest that beginning to ask that question is the beginning of 'deep engagement' (p.146), which they advocate for as the most legitimate way to proceed. Although I am working alongside individuals as opposed to social movements, my/our work is foregrounded on a political imperative to enable voice for individuals with lived experience in mental health. For me, the construction of the archive has been premised on the idea of enabling individuals with lived experience to speak back into the archives at the Wellcome Library, confronting the dominance of the medical practitioner voice, and then beyond that into the field of mental health. For me, this has been about picking a 'side', and making that allegiance clear. Thus, a deep engagement with the contributors is what I have been seeking to move towards.

Being a 'deeply engaged' academic who picks a 'side' involves confronting the lived contradictions that come with building solidarity on the one hand, and maintaining a foothold in academia on the other. Cresswell and Spandler (2013) suggest that:

Confronting such lived contradictions...results in productive, yet, at the same time, problematic, 'unsettled relationships' (see Bannerji et al. , 1992)...Indeed, we would suggest that embracing such unsettled relations is a precondition for defining a politico-ethical stance that is truly 'deeply engaged' (p.146).

Cresswell and Spandler (2013) surface these lived contradictions as (1) agent verses object (2) solidarity verses recuperation and (3) theory verses experience.

(1) Agent verses object surfaces the ever present tendency or temptation inherent in academic work to turn the individuals we work alongside into objects rather than critical agents, particularly when the notion of an 'interpretative responsibility' (Lather, 2011) is so deeply embedded in academic frameworks. (2) Solidarity verses recuperation surfaces the fact that the compelling desire for solidarity with the individuals we work alongside sits in tension with what can be an equally compelling desire for individual recuperation and reward from within the academic field. This desire is partly motivated from the need for economic survival but is also caught up in the 'lures' of hegemonic prestige. The pursuit of



'impact factors' and 'esteem indicators' associated with building an academic career (Cresswell and Spandler, 2013, p. 143) can often result in recycling the knowledge gained from engagement with others predominantly for selfish ends. (3) Theory vs experience surfaces the tendency in academic work to construct and place a theoretical framework over and above the experiential knowledge production of the individuals we work alongside. These lived contradictions have also been surfaced and explored from within the participatory literature as irresolvable tensions circling in and around participatory work (de Leeuw et al, 2012; Kinpaisby 2008; Castree 2006; Smith, 1999; Castleden et al, 2012a and 2012b).

I become aware, in an up close and personal way, of the depth of *feeling* that is created by the weight of the injustices embedded in the first and third of these lived contradictions. This awareness, became much more of a reality to me through my experience of attending and co-presenting with Dolly at the 'Alternative Psychiatric Narratives Conference' (16-17 May 2014, Birkbeck, University of London) where I sensed a wall of frustration emanating from survivor sections of the audience, or what I would describe as an underlying anger, bubbling beneath the surface, threatening to break out. The 'wall of frustration' resonates with a description of the conference articulated by Russo and Beresford in their article, *Between exclusion and colonization: seeking a place for mad people's knowledge in academia*. The abstract of this paper outlines the premise of their article in the following terms:

The omnipresent psychiatric narrative of mental illness has always had its counter-narrative – the life stories of people labeled mad. The relationship between these two accounts has always been one of domination: mad voices have been – and continue to be – not heard, overwritten, silenced or even erased in the course of psychiatric treatment. As survivor researchers who have had these kinds of experiences, we wish to discuss parallels between this tradition and some contemporary academic efforts that claim to disrupt it (Russo and Beresford, 2015, p.153).

The article then describes the proceedings at both the 'Alternative Psychiatric Narratives Conference' (Birkbeck, University of London) and the 'Understanding Epistemic Injustice Conference' (University of Bristol) that Russo and Beresford both attended. In the article, Russo and Beresford problematize the notion of the academic gaze and the dangers inherent in turning the personal history of survivors back into a case to be analyzed. Drawing on Costa et al (2012), Russo and Beresford suggest that:

In the psychiatric encounter: you give your story, you receive a diagnosis. This unequal, often non-transparent and also dishonest exchange goes beyond individual treatment situations and persists in most academic research work about us and our narratives. We often find ourselves giving not just our story but also the knowledge that has emerged from our experiences only to have it re-framed, serving various purposes and different agendas, and ultimately alienated from us. The fact that these encounters with interested academics happen outside treatment, and that the new interpretation usually makes more sense than the psychiatric one, hardly prevents us from feeling like somebody's case again (2015, p. 153-154).

Russo and Beresford surface the fact that these conferences were primarily framed around papers and presentations that were 'on' and not 'with' the individuals they sought to document and theorize about. For Russo and Beresford this raises a fundamental concern as to whether, and in what ways, the narratives presented could really be read as 'alternatives' given the absence of first person voices from survivors themselves. Their problematization revolves around the fact that the premis of the conferences 'at first seems inviting and like they might even help to disrupt psychiatric control' but in fact the absence of first person survivor perspectives can be read as yet another 'marginalization of mad people's own knowledge' (p.154). Russo and Beresford (2015) also trouble academic illusions of grandeur in their critique of the 'Epistemic Injustice Conference', where they detected an undercurrent from the academic researchers who appeared to perceive their role in the following terms:

In their presentation on 'strategies of silencing', the main organizers of the event (Havi Carel and Ian Kidd) explored epistemic injustice in the healthcare context, asking how to work towards recognition of patient voices. In outlining different ways of doing this, these scholars did acknowledge the work of patients' organizations. It was clear, however, that they saw this work as categorically separate and different from their own efforts to develop philosophical tools to 'help people structure their experiences'. The view that there are folks ('them out there') who need 'our' tools that we should develop for 'them' (but without them) underpinned the entire conference (p.155).

I can take the reverberations of this criticism in various ways, some of which are already well rehearsed and laid bare in the narrative carried in this thesis. In a sense, I have been constantly asked myself to confront the degree to which I have reenacted the stance surfaced by Russo and Beresford in the archive- 'developing a tool' to 'help structure experience' with too little involvement in decision-making from the contributors let alone involvement from wider survivor movements, collectives, communities or networks. I am aware of the possibility that everything I have done could be interpreted as deeply patronizing, and full of assumptions. This problematic also extends outwards in relation to the knowledge production contained in this thesis- the reflecting on the process, and the

extent to which I am subjugating Dolly, Peter, Stuart, and Andrew's reflections in my dominant narrative. I would say that forcing myself to confront these dilemmas has been an ever-present concern, manifesting as a deeply held and embodied anxiety that has kept me on edge as I have moved through the various stages of this research. As the writing process progressed, I made a conscious decision to invite the contributor's to reflect with me as a means of bringing their knowledge of the process in, but their positioning in my thesis, under and in my dominant voice, seems like an unavoidable consequence of singular, authoritative, PhD frameworks. Lather sums this up for me in her reflections on academic research:

I think sometimes constraining the researcher's analytical voice is a good thing to do. I call it getting in the way, getting out of the way—there's that dance—getting in the way of the data, getting out of the way of the data... There's always the manipulation of data. So, whether you want to make your manipulations visible, whether you want to foreground or background that manipulation, that's the decision you have to make as the researcher. But you can't get away from manipulating the data. That's what we do! (Lather, 2007, p.29).

In relation to the second lived contradiction brought out by Cresswell and Spandler (2013), I would suggest that the need for academic recuperation is, in a sense, exactly what this PhD is. It is using the knowledge from the process to gain a doctorate to further my academic career. My position as the academic in the project, whether cloaked in participatory rhetoric or not, has bought with it a set of uncomfortable asymmetries between the contributors and myself connected into cultural, symbolic and economic capital. My status as the 'academic' translates into immediate economic gain. I entered the process with a Collaborative Doctoral Award with a bursary attached; whereas Dolly, Peter, Andrew and Stuart have been expected to contribute their knowledge and time with only expenses reimbursed. This sits in direct tension with the tenets of participatory practice, which 'calls for more relevant, morally aware and non-hierarchical practice which engages with equity to a greater degree' (Pain, 2004, p.652).

*Extract from interview with Andrew, 29 May 2015*

Anna: How do you feel about the asymmetries in the project? I came with a bursary. You were expected to contribute for free, there is a huge disparity there, do you question whether that is a good ethical model to work within?

Andrew: It isn't a problem for me. We all have our own individual resources. I am proud to have contributed to the archive. It gave me a new focus. I have re-read what I contributed and it is something I would do all over again. I got my expenses paid, and I used the opportunity to do other things when here in London, but I know

what you mean about the asymmetry. Service users are so often expected to do things for free, but that is not a reason for not doing things I don't think. You can have reasons for not doing things, such as you feel it is not ethical, or that you would be setting a bad example, or you would be letting down your friends, they are good reasons for not doing things, and I have withdrawn from projects in the past, but I knew what the deal was at the beginning, and I was happy with the trade-off. In an ideal world, service users who are articulate and able to contribute to discussions, they would be paid in the same way as others for similar roles, but it has not been an issue for me.

Anna: It bothers me, Andrew. I wonder if there is a way that academics like me could do things differently to make it more equitable?

Andrew: Yes there is something about academics and the use of participant stories. You could get to the position where some people might ask, whose story is it anyway? But if I felt my story was being usurped I would have withdrawn, but I don't feel that has happened here.

Andrew's thoughts provide valuable insight. The set up for very many reasons hasn't been without benefits, and these benefits need to be upheld and acknowledged. In relation to getting travel expenses reimbursed Andrew found ways to make the most of the opportunity that provided. Yet there is an underlying acceptance within all of us of the way things are. In Andrew's case this translates into the idea that to push for greater equality would be unrealistic for him as service user, and in my case it translates into a feeling of helplessness against the academic system. I would like here to draw in what I see as an important insight from Weberian formulations on how legitimacy works, as summarized by Johnson et al:

Weber argued that a social order is legitimate "only if action is approximately or on the average orientated to certain determinant 'maxims' or rules" (Weber 1978 [1924], p.31). He notes that even though individuals may not always hold the same norms, values, and beliefs, their behavior nevertheless becomes orientated to an order that is in accord with rules or beliefs that they *presume are accepted by most others* [emphasis added]. Because individuals perceive that others support this social order, the order seems like a valid, objective, social fact. Consequently, the individuals act in accord with that order themselves, even if they privately disagree (2006, p.55).

If I move forward in an academic role, bearing in mind that my own position in academia is by no means stable, how can I find ways to more actively challenge these accepted, legitimized norms in order to bring positive action out from my disagreement with the status quo?

Before I descend too far back into disillusionment with myself and process, I need to surface the moments where I *have* actively sought to push, resist, influence and change some of this tension in a positive way. I have gained, through this process, a gradual but growing commitment to try where possible to share the capital gains inherent in my position as academic. Part of this relates to symbolic capital, and finding ways to co-produce academically orientated publications with the contributors (see Sen & Sexton, forthcoming). It is also about looking for other spaces and opportunities to share gains and rewards. As we have entered the dissemination phase there have been three occasions where I have had the opportunity to access academic grants to fly to America and Italy to attend academic conferences to talk about our archive. It troubled me that I was going alone, not least because I knew the content of the papers would be much stronger if co-presented. It also troubled me because it is a privilege to be the one to get on the plane. However, the boundary around academic funding meant that the money was there for me and not for the contributors. In March 2015, I was in the pub with my supervisor Andrew Flinn and another archival academic both of whom undertake participatory research and we were talking about attending the Italian conference again this coming year (November 2015). I told them I didn't want to keep doing that anymore, I didn't want to play the game of attending conferences to share participatory practice and research without my co-producers. This struck chords, and the door began to open to the possibility that there might be a way to find the money to fund both a contributor's attendance and mine. For me this was a profound breakthrough, a small act of resistance, and in this instance the door opened far more easily than I expected. Within/against can be a productive position- that is what I want to take forward from this experience.

There have been other moments of resistance in the process. One instance revolves around getting academic ethical approval for my research. I documented this in my journal with my entries centering around an internal UCL training session I attended on 14 May 2012, as well as my attendance at my ethical review meeting with the ethics committee on 16 July 2012. The UCL ethics review is positioned to encompass the dominant ethical epistemologies of medical and social research. The research approach that I needed to adopt represented a resounding culture clash with some of the accepted universals that were being pushed at the training: anonymity; representative sampling; the researcher as lone authoritative overseer assessing potential harm and establishing protocols to protect the participants. I knew that my research couldn't sit within these frames or share their language, and that my frustrations are shared with other humanities based researchers who have also articulated this clash of conflicting ethical stances within the review process

(Stark, 2012; Shea, 2000; Faulkner and Tallis, 2006; Beresford and Wallcraft, 1997; Holland, 2007; Butz, 2008). I knew that I would be distanced from what this training was drawing out as the 'standard UCL approach'. Instead, I would be drawing more on the ethical frameworks established within Oral History, using the Oral History Society Guidelines (Oral History Society, n.d.) as my basis. I orientated myself around oral history because the guidelines produced in the field inherently recognize ethics as a *process of relational negotiation*. In my journal, I state that:

The fundamental difference is that my research is a collaboration. I am aiming to working *with* and not *on* the participants, this shift in positioning changes everything to do with ethics- decision making is a continual process between the parties. It is not possible to state at the outset a standard set of universal protocols like everything will be anonymized or that sensitive information about the individual will remain confidential. This is entirely dependent on the negotiated process of informed consent. Rather than making these sweeping statements of intended action, I will need to try to communicate the values that are guiding my approach (Journal, 15 May 2012).

During the training session itself, with a tangle of thoughts running through my mind, I began to question my perception of how the session was being framed by the trainers. Surely they have come across plenty of humanities based scholars such as anthropologists using participant observation, and researchers engaged in ethnography who have raised issues around agency and not wanting to anonymize as a means of closing the gap between researcher and researched? I cannot be the first. If I draw their attention to my research they will begin to share an alternative perspective for researchers like me. So I wait for the right moment and then I interrupt:

"Hi I am Anna Sexton and I am studying in the Department of Information Studies. In my PhD I am working with a small group of individuals who are writing personal stories of their recovery from mental health difficulties, which we intend to make public in an online archive. My research is actually around the process of working collaboratively in this way to build archives, including of course the ethical questions underlying this approach. I feel slightly at odds with this training session because I intend to give the contributors agency over their own stories. That includes the right to be named but it is also about giving them the right to make an informed decision over what aspects of their story they want to share in a public space. Some of that information may be extremely personal. I wonder if you could comment on how I should approach the ethical review process".

Trainer One: "You say mental health?"

Me: "Yes".

Trainer One: "Well the first thing to say is that you are in the wrong place. You will need to go through an NHS review board".

Me: "But I haven't recruited them through the NHS, some of them aren't current service users. I was thinking at one point of also getting personal stories from

practitioners, I don't think I am going to go down that road but if I did I guess that might need NHS approval if they are still working in the NHS?"

Trainer Two: "Email me and I will clarify this for you. I have some useful contacts on NHS review boards and I can run this past them and check".

Me: "Ok thanks. What about the fact that I want to give the contributors agency, the right to be named, and control over the content of their public narrative?"

Trainer One: "You aren't planning to anonymize?"

Me: "Not unless the individual wants that, it would completely defeat the purpose"

Trainer One to Trainer Two: "Any thoughts?"

Trainer Two: "I assume you have talked this through with your supervisors and they understand your approach?"

Me: "Yes, my main supervisor is an oral historian and my research sits comfortably within frameworks he is used to using".

Trainer one: "It is likely to be picked up on by the review board, it comes back to writing things clearly for an audience who will be unfamiliar with this approach. My concerns, and what I would want clarification on, would be around the fact that you are working with vulnerable individuals around mental health. I assume you have expertise in this area or have someone involved in the project that can bring that expertise? You would need to make this clear".

Me: "Do you mean expertise in mental health?"

Trainer One: "Yes".

Me: "I have no expertise. I am an Archivist. Although, a retired clinical psychologist who has published service user narratives was my initial contact and has been a sounding board for the project. I met the contributors that I will be working with through him. I am sure he would continue to be a sounding board if I asked him but my ethical stance is resistant to this as having met the contributors I know it's not necessary".

Trainer One: "I would strongly suggest that it is necessary for your protection and the protection of your participants. The review board would certainly expect to see that you have the necessary expert support and sanction. If you have further questions please do contact me and I can try and advise you further".

Me: "Thank you".

I note in my journal, my embodied reaction to this exchange, heart pounding, heat rising into my cheeks. I felt the adrenalin coursing through me. To the reader the exchange may be perceived as hardly confrontational with a just about detectable push against normative assumptions, but my need to indicate a resistance impacted me physically and emotionally. I was annoyed and troubled by the fact that the word 'mental health' was an immediate marker for the trainers that pulled with it the normative assumptions around 'patient' and 'vulnerable' and 'incapable of decision making without "expert" support'. As argued by Holland (2007), 'these paternalistic and medically derived concerns' are the very assumptions about mental health that are 'challenged by first-person perspectives' (p.895). I went on to write my ethics review application in a way that argued against the requirement for the involvement of a medical professional (although Jerome Carson remained supportive, he maintained a helpful distance). I attended the review board meeting with the mindset that the inclusion of expert control and sanction from a medical

practitioner was not going to be the way we would proceed. With some initial reservation from the review board, this was accepted, and I was granted ethical approval.

The motif attached to the figure of the 'engaged academic' (Cresswell and Spandler, 2013) as someone who must confront the 'unsettled' and 'unsettling' relations (Bannerji et al, 1991; Katz, 1994, Blomley, 1999; Fuller, 1999) that develop from having multiple roles with conflicting priorities that clash and collide in the pivotal moments of the process, as well as in the intricate microscopic detail of every conversation and interaction- that motif resonates deeply with my lived experience. Several writers who have confronted these challenges (Routledge, 1996; Maxey 1999) seek to suggest that binaries between activism and academia are overcome when the researcher enters the 'third space' of critical engagement:

Certainly no simple opposition exists between academia and activism. Rather, occupying a third space of critical engagement enables research to become a personal and reflexive project of resistance (Routledge, 1996).

In my experience that third space is a space in which that opposition remains in tension (Katz, 1994). It is an opposition that reflexivity exposes but cannot resolve. Finding ways to nurture ethical and deep engagement whilst maintaining status as both 'professional archivist' and 'academic researcher' is as an ongoing, continuing, never settled or settling negotiation. It needs to remain *uncomfortable*, if it feels anything else then complacency has inevitably taken hold. Fuller (1999) suggests that it is *in* the constant reassessment, renegotiation and repositioning of a researcher's various identities that a collaborative position can be nurtured. However, Fuller recognizes that the achievement of such an aim, of coping in that space of constant negotiation and renegotiation, is 'fraught with difficulties of both a professional and personal nature with anxieties developing as the personal and professional spheres of the researcher/activist are combined, intertwined, manipulated and recast' (p. 226). In keeping with Fuller (1999), I can testify to my experience as a learning process of confronting and coming to terms with my multiple positionalities. The anxiety manifests because it is *necessarily* a process without resolution or conclusion.

As surfaced by other participatory practitioners with a foothold in academia (Castree, 2006), to uphold conflicting roles is to find myself in a continual state of contradiction; feeling and believing in the importance of pushing towards deep engagement and equity in research relationships whilst realizing that this equity can never be fully achieved (Fuller, 1999). To be an engaged academic is to act with and in the possibility that in striving



Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
towards equity, the distance and difference that I/we are so desperate to overcome may in fact be entrenched, reinforced and reinscribed within and because of participatory intentions. This contradiction is surfaced by writers such as Greenwood et al (2012), who express concern that the claim advanced by participatory researchers that the line between researcher and researched is blurred, or even upended through participatory practice is always an ongoing falsehood. Drawing on Ahmed (2000), who surfaces a range of concerns in regards to the claims of collaborative ethnographic practice, Greenwood et al (2012) suggests that hierarchical distance and difference is in fact continually 'reinscribed through acts that purport to merge subjects who occupy different positionalities' (p.186). Ahmed's (2000) argument is that any narrative of overcoming relations of authorization in traditional research constitutes another form of authorization (p.56), as it is the researcher who is praised for giving up authority. For Greenwood et al (2000) 'any act of authoring research framed in participatory and collaborative language risks *reinforcing* the distance between subjects precisely by naming that distance as overcome'. These are the 'complex, multidimensional, intractable, dynamic problems' (Kindon et al, 2009, p.91) associated with deep engagement in participatory research.

### **I am a collaborator**

#### ***Being personal, welcoming attachment, refusing distance***

In trying to describe and bring knowledge out of what it has been like to build up a relationship with Dolly, Peter, Andrew and Stuart, this is where I start to enthuse about the participatory process. There are tones of emotion weaving and threading through my journal that testify to how pleasurable and rewarding I have found it to be in their company, sharing the experience with them, growing close to them. The researcher part of me, patterned to be rational and measured, flips around. Instead of telling myself not to be so negative, I have to tell myself not to gush, not to fall into romanticizing our relationships. We have thrived on building intimacy between us, welcoming attachment, refusing distance. Embedded and ingrained in both my 'professional' and 'academic' self there is the normative template that upholds neutrality, objectivity and distance. It is a template that places a hard and fast boundary between private and public selves, and a template that carries with it an implicit warning to guard against personal connection. Perhaps in contrast to my experience of letting go/not letting go of my expertise around the archive (which is

also an engrained condition embedded in my professionalism), I have found these normative templates easier to resist/transform. Very simply, building a relationship with Dolly, Peter, Andrew and Stuart has been about us getting to know each other in a personal way, and intuitively from my first one-to-one meetings with each of them, this is the way in which we have proceeded. Slowly, gradually, but also willingly and optimistically, we have been building a personal connection. Dolly sums up the dynamic in the following terms:

What made it feel like a genuine partnership was that we shared in the proper sense of the word: ideas, thoughts, experiences, emotions, fun and work (Sen & Sexton, forthcoming).

And Stuart, characterizes our relationship with the words:

I liked you Anna [...]the process of knowing you, it has been a pleasant experience [...]we worked on a personal level (Interview via email, 22 May 2015).

I find resonance with Hailey's writing on effective participatory practice in which he explores the benefits inherent in participatory endeavours operating in development contexts, in which the founding principle have been the establishment of strong inter-personal relationships between facilitators and community members. Hailey explores the work of Harnath and Sharmistha Jagawati who worked for the NGO Sadguru, which operates in the tribal districts of Northeast Gujerat. He says of their approach:

They spent the first two years of their work walking up to 30kms a day, talking with the villagers in over 200 villages. By doing this they gained an understanding of the needs of local people, but more importantly they built friendships, developed trust, and gained credibility on which their future work would be based...'walking and talking'...was highly symbolic, and was the foundation on which Sadguru's relationship with the local community was based (2001, p.91).

Hailey advocates for participatory approaches that are not based on formulaic, structured relationships but on personal interactions that foster continual, reciprocal, mutual dialogue. He warns that these relationships are open to criticism, and are 'easily manipulated by educated, articulate individuals whose power is derived from their access to funds, political contacts and new technologies' (p. 101). He points to the fact that sometimes these personal relationships are a façade that enables cynical manipulation and paternalism. Yet he points to cases in which the personal relations sought are genuine, and lead to effective sustainable joint working. In the archive of mental health recovery stories we didn't have two years to 'walk and talk' before working on the archive, yet within the constraints that we were operating under, getting to know each other gave our work a strength. Hailey

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
sums this up by suggesting that centering personal dialogue, conversation, discussion and interaction can lead to affective and effective participation when rooted in a dynamic of mutual trust and respect, particularly when fused with a degree of affection, friendship and trust' (2001, p.101). From a different perspective, in an exploration of participatory approaches in health contexts, Heckler and Russell (2008) seek to advocate for the centrality of 'positive affect and mutual liking' as the underpinning dynamic for establishing 'productive partnerships' (p.331). They surface a tendency in the literature around collaborative working to reduce complex personal relationships to a single characteristic such as 'trust', 'openness' or 'inclusiveness' that is then explored through an assessment of project structure rather than personal embodied interactions between people. Heckler and Russell (2008) recognize that this is in part related to the difficulty in pinning down the emotional dynamics that foster positive means of co-production, yet they also surface the tendency in their field to see relationships in instrumental rather than emotional terms. They conclude with the radical suggestion that it is the depth and strength of the 'personal relationship and emotional engagement' that will ultimately make or break a partnership (p.350). Similarly Harrison et al (2003) acknowledge the centrality of one-on-one relationships to partnership working, and consider 'trust, respect, honesty and shared risk taking' to be the fundamental qualities of functioning partnership relationships (p 28). Crucially, they recognize that having the right structure around a project will take you so far in being able to collaborate effectively, but ultimately, effective joint working is grounded in the establishment of strong reciprocal interpersonal ties (p.35). I believe my/our experience of collaborative work resonates with, and directly feeds into this perspective.

### ***Embodying ethics, building trust***

As a collaborative researcher I have tried to foster a commitment to seeing ethics as more than just a 'tick box exercise', constrained to the production of an informed consent form, that once signed removes the need to think about the ethics involved in research or practice. I have tried to embody ethics in building a relationship with the contributors, and it is heartening to learn by interviewing Dolly, Stuart, Andrew and Peter that my actions were perceived to embody my ethical claims:

I remember you brought the drinks and we were in a coffee shop round the corner from the Cock Pit Arts and you didn't push me into anything, that sticks out as important. You talked about archives and wanting it to be our story on our terms but you weren't demanding my involvement, you suggested I got back in touch with you after I had time to think about it, and I remember the others asking me

afterwards what our meeting was about and I said there was something *genuine* [emphasis added] about you because you had been clear about the aims and then left it with me. I don't like authority and that authoritarianism wasn't there from the start, and that continued through the process. You didn't demand I worked in a certain way, participating on your terms, you were accommodating even to the extent of travelling to meet me at times so it had the right balance for me from the word go (Interview with Peter, 1 May 2015).

When I have asked Stuart, Dolly, Andrew and Peter to reflect back with me on our initial meetings, to disentangle why they committed to working with me, they point to aspects of my demeanor and manner that were important indicators in assessing who I was, and whether they wanted to work with me. Peter and Dolly describe their initial impressions of me as 'warm' 'engaged' 'attentive' 'approachable' and 'friendly' and Stuart has referred to me when we have got together as a 'good soul'. I believe these impressions, the embodied cues we give to others through our demeanor and manner are vital in establishing ethics as a lived, *enacted* dynamic. I also want to say that my initial impressions of the four contributors were that they were equally 'accepting' 'warm' 'attentive' 'approachable' and 'friendly' embodying the same ethic. It never felt as if the trajectory of our relationship was a move from distrust to trust, though there were insecurities, niggles, worries in the early stage, as with all new relationships. It felt to me as if there was, from the start, an underlying assumption of the possibility and likelihood that we *would* go on to trust each other.

Reflections from Dolly and Peter suggest that Jerome's gatekeeping role and endorsed recommendation gave me a degree of conferred legitimacy that helped in the early establishment of our relationship.

***Extract from interview with Dolly Sen, 29 July 2014***

If it was just anyone contacting me I probably wouldn't have taken you up, but I trust him [Jerome]. I know he is a supporter of me rather than someone who has got their own agenda, yeah I took his word that it was a good thing to do.

***Extract from interview with Peter Bullimore, 1 May 2015***

No Jerome's recommendation wasn't important, I would have reacted the same if you had contacted me directly [pause]. Well perhaps I am being a bit disingenuous, I probably made more of an effort because Jerome had asked me. I get a lot of requests and my schedule means I can't respond positively to all of them. I see Jerome as a nice guy and he is there for genuine change on our behalf so I thought

well if he trusts you and is prepared to recommend you then there is unlikely to be a reason why I can't trust you, and he wouldn't be recommending you if you weren't motivated along similar lines.

However, this initial conferred trust needed to be built on. Christopher et al (2008) tie ethics and trust closely together, drawing out from their experiences of doing participatory work, five key features in collaborative research that help foster trusting relationships:

(1) acknowledge personal and institutional histories, (2) understand the historical context of the research, (3) be present and listen to community members, (4) acknowledge the expertise of all partners, and (5) be upfront about expectations and intentions (p.391).

Certainly, a similar drive to foster transparency and openness was there in our initial meetings. We spent time discussing the academic frame sitting round the research, we explored the institutional link to the Wellcome, we acknowledged aspects of our lives and experiences that were shaping our entry into the process, and we had a continual conversation about what we were aiming for in creating the archive. However, although these principles are important in the establishment of trust, it is more complex and intricate than the establishment and enactment of ethical protocols to drive a process. Trust is, in and of itself, a nebulous concept carrying a multiplicity of potential definitions. Philosophers of trust have drawn out its affectual characteristics (Baier, 1994). Jones (1996), for example, suggests that trust is 'an attitude of optimism that the goodwill and competence of another will extend to cover the domain of our interaction with her, together with the expectation that the one trusted will be directly and favourably moved by the thought that we are counting on her' (p.4). This resonates with the goodwill that infused our meetings even in the early stages, but it also points to the underlying element of obligation and responsibility that a trusting relationship engenders in both parties (Nickel, 2007). Making the choice to trust someone to fulfill their obligations creates a vulnerability, and introduces an element of risk for the truster. To trust is to open yourself to the potential for betrayal as brought out by Holton (1994) - 'When you trust someone to do something, you rely on them to do it, and you regard that reliance in a certain way: you have a readiness to feel betrayal should it be disappointed, and gratitude should it be upheld' (p. 67). He goes on to suggest that this range of reactive sentiments is a result of adopting 'the participant stance' (p.68). My perception is that in each of the 1:1 relationships that I developed with the contributors, the roles of truster and trusted were not fixed one-way positionalities. It was not simply a case of the participants trusting me to do the 'right' thing by them in my role as facilitator. In sharing aspects of our lives with each other, expecting

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
compassion, empathy and support from one another, we were both simultaneously truster and trusted, and this engendered reciprocity into our relationship.

### *Acting out of compassion and empathy*

Spandler and Stickley (2011) draw on Gilbert (2005, 2010) to identify the key qualities of compassion as a motivation to be caring and sensitive in our relation with others. This involves being able to be moved by distress, and being able to tolerate distress and understand it (p.557). This is vital because 'human beings are a profoundly social species who depend on the safety, care and support, affection, and encouragement of others to survive and thrive' (p.557). Acting out of compassion therefore involves fostering an active empathic presence, or what can be described as a 'being with', which is essentially an adoption of a stance that seeks out an understanding and appreciation of a person's unique way of being in the world (p.559). I was deeply moved by listening to Dolly, Stuart, Andrew, and Peter's sharing of their experiences. I *felt*, to the degree that it was possible for me to do so, their pain, hurt and anger as well as their optimism and hope. My empathy was picked up on by the contributors, by Stuart:

I felt you showed much understanding and insight into stigma people such as myself have experienced in life (Interview via email, 22 May 2015).

By Dolly:

My criticism of services wasn't seen as a personality disorder, my fear and mistrust of society's perception of mental distress wasn't part of paranoia, my sadness wasn't a sign of depression, my anger wasn't a sign of schizophrenia, my joy not a sign of mania. The emotions were seen as human and an appropriate response to experiences. It seems the only expectation this non-medical, non-survivor has of you is to be a human. There are no symptoms, only difficulties, which can be discussed and negotiated and usually handled with compassion. My words and experience were meaningful to Anna. (Dolly in Sen & Sexton, forthcoming).

And by Andrew:

I don't under estimate the fact that it has been quite therapeutic and cathartic to discuss my issues with you and to have them taken seriously and to have them understood, that was a very empowering part of the process (Interview, 29 May 2015).

Yet, the point I want to make here is that an empathetic, compassionate stance was always two-way and reciprocal. In one meeting with Stuart, we were interrupted by a call on my mobile that registered that my burglar alarm was going off at home. My family and I had had three previous burglaries in the space of two years that had prompted the fitting of

the burglar alarm, and I was visibly distressed and shaken by the prospect that it might be happening again. Stuart showed me by his sensitive response to me that he understood my concern and my anxiety in that moment. He understood the fear the call was dredging up inside me relating to my experiences of having my home being broken into. He was with me in that moment, in empathetic understanding. With all of the contributors at different times and in different ways, I have been met with the same degree of acceptance, understanding, and empathy that I have endeavoured to show to them. I have shared details with them relating to my husband's redundancy in 2011 (which came two months into starting this PhD), and the ways in which aspects of our security have unraveled as a result. I have shared with them my husband's resulting depression as well as my struggle to deal with his depression, and this has always been met with deep compassion. This is what building reciprocity into our relationship means to me.

### *Finding affinities, acknowledging difference*

The coming together and sharing of life that occurred as we progressed also finds an echo in the ways in which we were searching for a shared vision in relation to the goals, purpose and value of building the archive. I want to pick up on Peter's suggestion that it wasn't my background or situated position in relation to the mental health field that gave me initial legitimacy in his eyes, rather it was the nature of my intended action that resonated with him as desirable 'what you were wanting to achieve, our story on our terms...It was what you wanted to achieve that was important' (Interview, 1 May 2015). There was an immediate connection that resonated between us and brought us together and it was around the idea of giving/gaining voice and giving/gaining recognition. This connection became an important point of exchange in our early one-to-one meetings. For example, when I first met Stuart, we talked at relative length about a Radio Four programme he had recently listened to that explored the notion that history was told by the few. It was the idea of working together to challenge that, which sealed his initial commitment to the project. In reflection he sums this up in the following terms:

I felt it was a unique and forward thinking project as I am quite aware how the medical world records and archives information from their own suited perspective [...] I was eager to be involved as I was hoping a potential medical audience would gain, I believe, much insight into my own diagnosis and life with schizophrenia (Interview by email, 21 May 2015).

Similarly, Dolly reflecting back on our first meeting remembers it in the following terms:

We talked about creating something needed, something new, something that would add to the Wellcome's collections [...] I saw the importance of it [...] It got me interested in history, who gets to speak. I can't complain that the voices of survivors or people who have used mental health services aren't there if I am not willing to speak up myself. So that's how I looked at it [...] I have told you this before, 25 years in the mental health system and this is still one of the first times that someone has asked me about my story, because when you are in that relationship with a doctor or a psychiatric nurse they already have their own idea of what your distress is about. They don't ask you to know you, they look for the symptom that is in their little book and that is how they make sense of your world and your distress. I think it would be more powerful if they asked what has made you distressed now? Is there something that has made you be the way you are today? And that would give you a chance to say, actually yes, I know what has caused my distress, to me it is very obvious. Why couldn't I say that in psychiatry or the mental health system? Why does it have to be an archivist with no clinical link that asks that question? So yes I saw the archive as a place for creative expression but I also saw it politically as well, to challenge the system, why aren't you doing this? Why haven't you done this for me? (Interview, 29 July 2014).

And Peter:

I told you bits and pieces about my life but you were asking for a reason, there was a purpose, you weren't asking just to be nosey like some people do. People go away, write an article and not even have the gratitude to send you a copy, but I knew we were going to turn it into something, the archive, and I thought well you know we have a great opportunity here to leave a legacy and I wanted to be part of that. It also ties into the fact that I am not ashamed anymore. I used to be ashamed but now I am not and I want people to know the truth long after I am gone. I'd also looked at who the Wellcome Trust was and there was a bit of revenge in there – not against you but it was a chance to stuff it back up them with their money (Interview, 1 May 2015).

This coming together to form shared perspectives, and shared goals particularly when launching the archive was an important aspect of our relationship. Yet, in the coming together there has always been the need to recognize and respect the separations and differences between us, and those differences cannot be glossed over by a claim to solidarity or comradeship. I stand on the margins of the mental health system. I have not had to survive its abuse and cruelty. I cannot claim to share the same ground from which to speak. Church notes this irreconcilable separation in her own experience by saying that she 'felt with great clarity the degrees of separation' which made her different, which made her knowledge of survivors different (1995, p.68). Quoting Ellsworth she says that:

I brought a social subjectivity that has been constructed in such a way that I have not and can never participate unproblematically in the collective process of self-definition, naming oppression, and struggles for visibility in the face of marginalization engaged in by position(s) I do not share (1989, p.309 in Church,



1995, p.68).

This resonates with what I would describe as a tension between the need to forge a common interest and build solidarity around shared goals and similar human experiences, whilst recognizing and finding a way to work across the continuing separation between positions in the coming together. These degrees of separation are about the ways in which the totalities of our life experiences lead us to a different knowledge and a different perspective. This recognition of difference is one that must take into account my separation as a 'non-survivor' from Dolly, Andrew, Stuart and Peter, as well as all of the ways in which Dolly, Andrew, Stuart and Peter are separated from each other. Creating the homogenous category 'the contributors' (which I have done throughout this thesis) continually negates all the ways in which *they* are not the same. Negotiating the 'politics of difference' means confronting the *multiplicity* of difference, to trouble the 'false universals' (Mouffe, 1992) that place all survivors, or service users, or voice hearers as universally the same or universally different (Moosa-Mitha, 2005). For me, what this has meant, on a personal level, is learning to look twice into my own uses of 'othering' categories. To orientate myself as difference-centered is to seek to adopt an active recognition that I cannot know, share or speak on behalf of knowledge that emanates from situations and positions beyond my own experience. It also requires learning to trouble my tendency to universalize what is 'other' to me. It is to learn to engage in mutual dialogue in which there is a reciprocal commitment to listen, and in the listening, to resist reducing one another to instances of abstraction (Lugones and Spelman, 1983, p.581).

The complexity and resulting dissonance in confronting and negotiating difference has been forcibly brought home to me at various points in the construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories. In my relationship with Dolly, I can surface an aspect of this in relation to my awareness that Dolly has been participating in creating the archive while dealing with the threat of homelessness. This stark fact has caused me to understand deep within myself that our differences 'are not just discursive or theoretical: they are material, embodied and political' (Delhi, 1991, p.63 in Church, 1995, p.69). What is the ethical response to this difference? I know how I *feel* about it. I feel angry, and to some extent guilty in my deepening awareness of my own degrees of privilege. I also feel despairing, to some extent, because the archive might aspire to enact a degree of transformation, but it does nothing to touch the immediate issues and struggles that Dolly was facing at the time of its creation. Yet those feelings becoming problematic in their tendency to place Dolly in the position of victim. How can I acknowledge Dolly's reality in a

way that doesn't translate into a desire for 'mastery, heroism, and the wish to rescue'? (Lather, 2007, p.33) The only way is to acknowledge our difference as part of our friendship. To foster a commitment to name and deal with our differences, to talk to each other about these issues, and through that find ways to work in and through the things that keep us together and the things that keep us apart. Lorde calls us to confront difference in order to break through the silence. For Lorde (1984) 'it is not difference that immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken' (p.13). She argues:

Certainly there are very real differences between us ...but it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions which result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behavior and expectation (Lorde, 1984, p.115).

It has felt to me, particularly when I reflect on my relationship with Dolly, that in seeking to negotiate sameness and otherness, a productive tension has been created in our relationship by refusing to occupy either space too resolutely. In keeping with Han (2010), I would suggest that we are working towards refusing to negate our differences. In practice this has meant recognizing the limits to which the distances between us can be sublimated through empathetic understanding (p.14), whilst at the same time seeking not to amplify similarities too simplistically through claims to solidarity. It has been a case of seeking that third relational space in between 'same' and 'other' (perhaps even between friendship and enmity) in which there is critical reflection *on* as well as constant negotiation *between* 'fluctuations of distance and proximity' (p.14).

### ***Embracing Strong objectivity***

Moving towards 'deep engagement' has been a process in which I have stepped away from 'neutrality' as a founding principle orientating my actions, along with professional distance. I have sought to surface the personal nature of my relationship with the contributors, in order to indicate that we were involved in each other's lives to an intimate degree, and to argue that our level of commitment worked for us, and brought benefits for all of us. However, I would also argue that doing so whilst embracing critical reflexivity as both an attitude and a process, has meant holding on to a degree of objectivity. Here, I mean that even in the depth of engagement, it has been important to find ways of stepping back. This stepping back has been necessary in two respects. Firstly, a stepping back has been required in order to look above and beyond the immediacy of our relationship and our actions to context, to a reading of potential consequences and fall out. Secondly, a stepping

back has been required in order to enact an empathetic stance- it is a stepping back from self and perspective in order to effectively place ourselves, as much as it is possible to do so, into each others shoes.

The placing of objectivity in openly ideological research and practice is a source of contestation and heated debate. Within the archival field, in the debate between Greene and Jimerson (explored in Chapter 2 and returned to in Chapter 10) over the degree to which a social justice agenda should be the starting point and end of all archival acts, there is a sub-text around contested understandings of objectivity and neutrality and the degree to which archivists should infuse their actions with these values.

In trying to disentangle the values of objectivity and neutrality in relation to archival acts, it is necessary to first consider whether there is a difference *between* the values of objectivity and neutrality. Jimerson's position on objectivity and neutrality has been heavily influenced by the writings of historian Thomas Haskell (1998), whose own thinking and writing around these issues are set as a counterpoint (without being diametrically opposed) to the work of historian Peter Novick, author of *That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question and the American Historical Profession* (1988). Novick's work is a provocative deconstruction of how, since the late nineteenth century, the historian has used 'objectivity' as a guiding ideal without adequately questioning its paradoxes, contradictions and limits. For Novick, the historian's use of 'objectivity' as a value is 'essentially confused'. His work reveals that far from being 'objective'; the work of the American historian has been profoundly guided by personal and professional principles that have influenced their 'objective' practice, as well as practical exigencies that have influenced their principles. His conclusion from his deconstruction is that objectivity is not only unachievable, but it is ideologically flawed. Novick therefore makes a case for the historian to reject the use of 'objectivity' as a guiding value.

Haskell agrees with the tenets of Novick's deconstructive reading of the history of the American historical profession but makes an important distinction that enables him to reclaim 'objectivity' as an ideal. For Haskell, objectivity can still be a founding principle for historical endeavor as long as an ideological distinction is created between 'objectivity' and 'neutrality':

My impression, unlike Novick's, is that among the influential members of the historical profession the term objectivity has long since lost whatever connection it

may once have had with passionlessness, indifference, and neutrality....If objectivity could be reduced simply to neutrality, I would not bother to defend it (Haskell, 1998, p.3).

The ideological separation between 'objectivity' and 'neutrality' is the starting point for Jimerson's position in relation to archival acts. This is articulated throughout his writings, alongside an acknowledgement of the link to Haskell, and is summed up by Greene and re-iterated by Jimerson as a 'call to abandon any pretence of neutrality while still sustaining some meaningful form of objectivity' (Jimerson 2013, p.339). In seeking to better understand what Jimerson is arguing for by suggesting that archivists should engage in a 'meaningful form of objectivity' without connotations of 'neutrality', I have returned to the writings of Haskell whose defence of 'objectivity' is grounded in what he sees as the conceptual link between 'objectivity' and 'asceticism':

Insofar as [objectivity] is the expression in intellectual affairs of the ascetic dimension of life, it deserves a defense, for asceticism is not only "common to all culture," it is "the 'cultural' element in culture....Where there is culture there is asceticism." (Haskell, 1998, p.3).

At first glance, this conceptual linkage between 'objectivity' and 'asceticism' seems confusing, particularly as the latter is a notion clothed with religious connotations and the withdrawal of the self from the world and its pleasures to attain spiritual ideals such as devotion or holiness. However, for Haskell (1998), 'asceticism' as self-restraint is the essence of 'objectivity':

The very possibility of historical scholarship as an enterprise distinct from propaganda requires of its practitioners that vital minimum of ascetic self-discipline that enables a person to do such things as abandon wishful thinking, assimilate bad news, discard pleasing interpretations that cannot pass elementary tests of evidence and logic, and, most important of all, suspend or bracket one's own perceptions long enough to enter sympathetically into the alien and possibly repugnant perspectives of rival thinkers (p.39).

Haskell then draws out the value of 'detachment' as fundamental to achieving ascetic objectivity:

All of these mental acts—especially coming to grips with a rival's perspective—require detachment, an undeniably ascetic capacity to achieve some distance from one's own spontaneous perceptions and convictions, to imagine how the world appears in another's eyes, to experimentally adopt perspectives that do not come naturally—in the last analysis, to develop, as Thomas Nagel would say, a view of the world in which one's own self stands not at the centre, but appears merely as one object among many. To be dissatisfied with the view of the world as it initially

appears to us, and to struggle to formulate a superior, more inclusive, less self-centered alternative, is to strive for detachment and aim at objectivity (p.54).

For Haskell, the invocation of personal detachment enables us to resist even our own 'will to power'. Haskell is by no means alone in embracing a similar space within definitions of 'objectivity'. For example, in the work of feminist standpoint theorists such as Harding, it is possible to locate this same commitment to 'stepping outside' as a guiding principle within what she articulates as '*strong objectivity*'. Harding's writings on 'strong objectivity' are foregrounded by debate around objectivity verses relativism, which requires positioning on one side or the other. Harding (1995) argues for a third position that doesn't choose between objectivity and relativism but sets out a new kind of objectivity:

[There is a] shift from the old to the new objectivity question. The old one asked, "Objectivity or relativism: which side are you on?" The new one is still directed toward many of the concerns of those posing the older question: Which of competing grounds for claims about nature and social relations should we prefer? How can we block "might makes right" in the realm of knowledge production? How can we systematically identify widespread cultural assumptions about both nature and social relations that have distorted so much of what heretofore has passed as universally valid scientific knowledge? However, the new objectivity question...asks what should be rejected and what saved of the older objectivism? How can the notion of objectivity be modernized (postmodernized?) so that it is more useful for contemporary attempts to understand nature and social relations? (p.331).

Harding, like Haskell, argues for the separation of 'objectivity' and 'neutrality' in order to maximize the possibilities inherent in 'objectivity':

Such an analysis leads to one obvious possibility: to separate the goal of maximizing objectivity from the neutrality requirement in order to identify the knowledge-limiting values and interests that constitute projects in the first place. This possibility has been hinted at again and again in the literature without ever being formulated as a systematic program (p.340).

Does this call to uncouple the concept of objectivity from neutrality amount to the same thing within the writing of Haskell and Harding? Haskell (1998) is focused on examining the role of the historian and the quest to re-tell history as it really happened. Although he seeks to unshackle this quest from neutrality, he still holds 'truth' as the ultimate goal for the historian. Harding's (1995) starts from an examination of natural science as a discipline and the revelatory potential of paying critical attention to individual and collective actions as situated and positioned. Yet both reach a similar point, by seeking a particular kind of objectivity in which we can become more aware of the situated nature within systems, and in which we can surface the fact that human thought can only be partial - it is always limited by the fact of having only a particular historical location - of not being able to be

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
everywhere and see everything. To embrace this objectivity I have come to the realisation that the type of detachment it calls for is not the same as compartmentalization – it is not the division of personal from professional; thinking from feeling, it is not that sort of detachment. Rather, it is the process of recognizing my position and choosing to consciously and reflexively leave that position, to aim to take a God’s eye perspective, or the perspective of an ‘other’, while simultaneously appreciating that I can never fully see the whole and never fully see from positions that aren’t my own. This is the type of objectivity I have sought to embrace in this process.

### **We are now friends**

I think we have become friends. It’s not just professional it has gone beyond that into a friendship, I hope (Interview with Dolly Sen, 29 July 2014).

Friendship wasn’t how I began with each of the contributors but friends is what we became as we moved through the process. Lynch draws on Cicero to suggest that friendship is a ‘kaleidoscope and a complicated thing’ (Lynch, 2005, p.3). It is difficult to pin down to a single definition, but at its heart is the notion of choice. Friendship carries with it a motif of freedom: I can choose my friends. It implies an emotional bond: ‘a friend is someone for whom we have a depth of feeling’ (Lynch, 2005, p.4) and it also implies that the emotional bond is reciprocal: ‘friends feel deeply attached to each other and know that this feeling is reciprocated’ (Lynch, 2005, p.4). It needs time to develop, and is dependent on a shared existence, to declare someone as a friend, is to have got to know them in order to choose them. Friends accept one another, and I have felt acceptance in different ways from Dolly, Stuart, Andrew and Peter. It is not unusual to find that academics that seek to foster deep engagement as a guiding principle end in pronouncing friendship as a legitimate and profoundly beneficial outcome of their participatory practice with others (Lugones and Spelman, 1983; Hailey, 2001, Christian and Freeman, 2010). Ellsworth (1989) suggests that ‘friendship, as an appropriate and acceptable “condition” under which people become allies in struggles that are not their own names’ her ‘experience’ (p.317, footnote 66) and I would also claim that this form of friendship names my relationship with the contributors.

### *Friendship as experimentation*

Here I will turn again to Mentinis' (2015), who suggests that friendship can and ought to be viewed as a 'radical grammar of relating' that embraces the spirit of risk. For Mentinis, friendship offers the chance to enter into 'experimenting with others for the strict purpose of undoing the self, smashing out of its encapsulation, transgressing its borders, dis-identifying, and in turn producing a [new type of] community' (p.75). It is to that vision of friendship that I now turn.

In the *Politics of Friendship*, Derrida suggests that we think of the concept of friendship on the basis of its tension between commonality and non-commonality, refusing to resolve the tension into 'the order of the common nor of its opposite, neither appurtenance nor non-appurtenance, sharing or non-sharing, proximity or distance, the outside or the inside' (Derrida 1997, p.298). My experience of friendship with Andrew, Stuart, Peter and Dolly is characterized by an inability to resolve this tension; our friendship exists in the space in between. Perhaps, in common with all friends, we share ground and we stand apart at one and the same time.

Mentinis (2015) argues that to conflate friendship with comradeship is to 'negate the anarchic character of friendship' closing up the possibility of seeing friendship as a positive form of social experimentation, that resists the normative rules of relating (p.74).

Friendship can break us out of institutions that emphasize commonality and can enable us to break away from ingrained patterns of social interaction that dictate who usually relates to whom and on what terms (p.74). Similarly, Lynch (2005) draws on Derrida to suggest that friendship is 'an inherently ambiguous relationship', but the view of friendship 'as a relationship predicated on separation and difference allows for the accommodation of divergent opinion in the relationship, for openness to change and development, and for spontaneity' (p.77). In these terms, friendship has the potential to break us out of the homogeneity of our existence, as suggested by Badhwar (1993), who argues that the 'socially and politically subversive potential of friendship can be an important counterweight to the power of coercive communities' (p.34).

The subversive potential of friendship is explored by Kingston (2009) who looks at Foucault's work around homosexual relations to surface an emerging view of friendship as the collaborative creation of new relationships that hold the potential to 'constitute a form of localized resistance to social normalization' (p.7). For Foucault, homosexuality is not a

fixed identity that arises from discovering an inner nature that has been hidden by an oppressive heterosexual hegemony. Instead Foucault's argument is that homosexuals face the task of creating their own subjectivities – a task that is bound up with the creation of experimental relationships with others (p.9). Out of this exploration of homosexual relations, Foucault forges a novel view of what friendship itself could and perhaps should be:

Foucault thus conceives of homosexuality as a space for the construction of novel relationships and subjectivities, as opposed to a fixed identity that one can adopt or discover within oneself. This approach sets him apart from those who would engage in identity politics and ground solidarity among homosexual people in their common interests and identity. Its emphasis on similarity between group members and a shared way of life means that identity politics entails the creation of a rigid set of norms for homosexual relationships. An identity politics thus creates conformity. Foucault on the other hand, wants to put us on a path toward the creative and collaborative construction of subjectivity. This is essentially what he means by 'friendship'- working together to build new subjectivities and relationships rather than falling back on social norms. It is a concept of friendship that privileges experimentation...it privileges heterogeneity over homogeneity, in that it anticipates the creation of many different relationships based on the various preferences of their participants (p.10).

According to Kingston, Foucault expands the project of experimental friendship into a general challenge to subscribing to normalized relationships. The narrow range of relationships available to us can be abandoned in favour of the cooperative and spontaneous construction of novel relationships. This will establish a more fluid way of being together that allows for greater diversity and creativity (p.12-13), that enables a 'fight against the impoverishment of the relational fabric' (Foucault, 1997, p.158 in Kingston 2009, p.12). Foucault's work on homosexuality and social experimentation leads us into a novel view of friendship that is not founded on similarity between friends. It is a view that rejects that there can be a fixed body of norms that determines how friends relate to one another. Instead, it sees friendship as a creative collaboration in which new subjectivities are forged 'as participants struggle to come to terms with one another' (p.15).

Working with Dolly, Andrew, Peter and Stuart on the archive enabled me to form a depth of attachment to four individuals who I would not have met through my usual patterns of social interaction, and as a result of our relationship being characterized by friendship, we crashed through a few social boundaries, resisting at least some of the restrictive norms of relating that sit around notions of the 'professional' and the 'academic'. Most significantly, as I have drawn out, we resisted from the outset a restriction around the personal; we



refused to guard against 'personal connection'. We positively sought out emotional attachment, and in this way I do see our resulting friendship as presenting a challenge to the impoverishment of the relational fabric existing in and around both professional and academic work. Our personal means of relating did not negate or erase the differences between us. It did not smooth out all the asymmetries. It also wasn't without challenge - there were difficulties, misunderstanding and disappointments. To hold up our 'friendship' and claim it was wholly legitimate all of the time bringing nothing but benefit for all of us would be a denial of the complexity and ambiguity inherent in our relationship and means of relating. However, I do want to acknowledge a particular benefit that arose from the friendship that I shared with Dolly, Peter, Stuart and Andrew, and that benefit is the profound impact that our friendship had on my own subjectivity. Mentinis (2015) suggests that friendship offers the chance to enter into 'experimenting with others for the strict purpose of undoing the self, smashing out of its encapsulation, transgressing its borders' and this resonates with what I see as one of the major benefits of us preceding together on personal terms. I can point to a profound shift, a transition in how I negotiate my own narrative, my own personal history as a result of spending time, particularly in this instance with Peter and Dolly. In the archive of mental health recovery stories, I provide a description of the birth of my first son, and my subsequent distress at the emotional numbing, the detachment and utter blackness that I felt in the year after his birth. Reading back over that narrative, that construction of my past, I realize that I make no attempt to frame that experience. There is no sub-text on why I came to be in that place, there is no attempt at sense-making to accompany my description of what happened to me. This is because I had no valid explanation for that time in my life, nothing about it made sense. It was a painful experience that I had buried unresolved. It emerged in the archive, still unresolved, but at least acknowledged. At the point when I wrote the description for the archive, I had no adequate means of explanation. I had post-natal depression as a result of hormonal imbalance. That is all I had. Spending time with Peter and Dolly, listening to their perspectives, I began to have access to another language through which to frame and make sense of the rupture that I experienced giving birth to my son. I began to see past the symptoms (the emotional numbing, the detachment, the emptiness, the void, the despair) to the trauma of the birthing experience. I also became alive to being able to read the rapid loss of sense of self that accompanied the physical changes that occurred as I became a mother, and the profound shock and incredulity associated with looking in the mirror and seeing a person I did not recognize. They gave me a way of seeing past my symptoms, to the trauma and my subsequent embodied response to it. They gave me a way of reframing my past. They gave me the ability to make sense of myself. For me, this

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy is a profoundly valuable and legitimate outcome of being involved in creating the archive. I did not have an awareness when I started working with Dolly, Andrew, Peter and Stuart of my own personal immersion in the medical model of mental illness. I didn't have any conception that it was something I would find myself breaking out of in a very personal way. Speaking of her experience of working with psychiatric survivors, Kathryn Church (1995) says:

I have come to the topic of psychiatric survivors and their circumstances as part of a personal search for the roots of my own oppression. I learned to see it in their lives first. As a consequence (or a gift) I began to identify with it and deal with it in my own life (p.55).

Although, I cannot claim an awareness at the outset that the need for personal reframing was part of what drew me to working with voice in mental health archives, I agree with Church's sentiment that having the space to confront and deal with aspects of myself by learning a new language for framing my past, has been a 'gift'. I see this as a desirable, appropriate and legitimate outcome from my friendship with the contributors, my involvement with the archive and the reflexive research presented here.

### *Friendship stretches into the future*

The exciting thing about friendships arising out of collaborative practice is the future possibilities it brings. Through friendship, my respective relationships with Andrew, Peter, Stuart, and Dolly stretch beyond the confines of the single participatory process we were involved in together, beyond the boundaries of the construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories. Our relationship stretches out into the future, with open-ended possibility. These new possibilities are already beginning to take shape in the form of collaborating with Peter on writing his autobiography, and with Dolly, in various ways through co-writing and co-presenting. We are also involved in each other's lives, socially, keeping our connection and attachment alive.

Yet bound up in the positivity I feel about our ongoing connection, and the reassurance that connection gives me about the ethics of my practice, there is a realization of complexity. Stacey (1998) writing from the perspective of feminist ethnography draws out the fine line that is walked in research that embraces capacities such as intuition, empathy and relationship (Stanley and Wise, 1983) in the quest for egalitarian research processes characterized by authenticity, reciprocity and inter-subjectivity between researcher and

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
researched (Reinharz, 1983). Stacey (1998) argues that in seeking connection and attachment, the researcher walks a path in which the risk of betrayal and manipulation for all concerned is necessarily also amplified (p.23). With deep connection there is a heightened responsibility and obligation, because if things go wrong and the relationship breaks down, the hurt that this engenders is deeply felt by all concerned. My description of our enactment of 'deep engagement' is testament to the benefits that we shared. It is in keeping with Stacey's (1998) description of the potential rewards engendered in adopting a deep relational approach in that we were able to give to each other 'practical and emotional support' coupled with 'comparatively non-judgmental acceptance', which meant we came to value our relationship 'deeply' (p.26). Yet *because* of this commitment, *desertion* would be felt equally as strongly, and therefore there is no easy way in which any of us can walk away. For this reason, Stacey (1998) declares that research that strives towards a depth of relationship is potentially the most beneficial but also the most dangerous means of conducting research (Stacey, 1998, p.26). Dangerous or not, I can see that the friendship we have chosen to enact is a form of opportunity *and* constraint. We are bound into it- we reap its benefits, but equally and at the same time we are tied into the bond.

Recognizing friendship as *opportunity* and *constraint* brings me to the realization that as a researcher, to become intimately involved to the point of friendship with those I research alongside also carries with it a question of capacity: there is a limit to the number of people I can hold close to me, and be committed to. As partially surfaced in Chapter 7, this is the irreducible tension underlying the politics of friendship that I have enacted in this process: to claim friendship, intimacy and relational depth is an act which draws the lines of inclusion around a handful, a select few. There is no escaping this tension, no way round the question of capacity, limit and number that underpins and guides my claim to friendship. There has to be an acceptance that to enact such friendship is to simultaneously exclude. It is a form of relating and doing research that names, chooses, and privileges the *few*.

## Chapter 9: Legitimacy

Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions (Suchman, 1995, p.574).

I have already been implicitly carrying and exploring the notion of legitimacy in this thesis. It is embedded within my narrative of the construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories. I have been using participatory discourse as the socially constructed system of norms, beliefs, and values through which to trouble and pose questions relating to legitimacy. I have explored my actions and the extent to which they can be seen as desirable, proper or appropriate when scrutinized under participatory rhetoric, and I have used that as a platform to problematize the participatory discourse itself, as well as a means to think through the tensions and difficulties inherent in the aspiration to act in a participatory way. The reader may be struggling to decide at this point whether my decision to go down a deeply personal route with Dolly, Peter, Andrew, Stuart (Chapter 8) was desirable, proper and appropriate against their own socially constructed values and beliefs, and may be struggling to weigh up the values and beliefs that I am laying out as the things that shaped me and this process. In this way, questions of legitimacy are infused in every paragraph within this thesis.

This chapter seeks to explore legitimacy from a more explicit yet different trajectory. It seeks to shift the focus away from participatory discourse as the legitimizing system, placing the focus instead on mental health survivor discourse and its underlying values and beliefs, in order to examine the ways in which the archive, and its embodied process of construction, is perceived as legitimate/illegitimate from this perspective. To do this, I do not *start* from a theoretical base in survivor literature (although I go on to draw on it and related academic writing). Instead I begin with a concrete experience in which survivor discourse was made real to me. I focus in on my experience of attending the Alternative Psychiatric Narratives Conference (Birkbeck University, 16-17 May 2014), which Dolly and I attended together as co-presenters, delivering a joint paper reflecting on our motivations for, and experience of, constructing the archive of mental health recovery stories. I use our presence at the conference as a point of departure for exploring what I learnt from beginning to consider the archive and its process of construction from within a survivor-activist framework. I then use the reflections of the contributors to surface the layers of complexity surrounding this perspective in order to reinsert an indication that there is

always a multiplicity of social positions from which the archive can be legitimized or delegitimized.

Speaking at the Alternative Psychiatric Narratives Conference with Dolly was a layered experience. I came away with a mass of contradictory readings around what had occurred. At that conference I felt that 'I/we/the participatory process/the archive' were, in some senses, being accepted and viewed as legitimate by the audience (or at least sections of it), whilst at the same time 'I/we/process/product' were being troubled, questioned and possibly rejected (at least by sections of the audience) as illegitimate. On a personal level, the experience represented a significant and profound moment of *unsettling*. I describe that unsettling in my journal as 'an overwhelming feeling of disturbance' that 'reverberated' through me. At the time, I recorded the feeling as a discomfort that 'cut deeply' (Journal, 19 May 2014). I read that now, standing back from the immediacy of my emotional response, staring at my dramatic use of language, wanting to tease out what caused me to write about it in that way. If I place myself back in that moment I begin to feel the tension again. The discomfort is still there, yet, things have unfolded since that moment and a positive new relationship has resulted from Dolly and I being at the conference presenting together. I want to try and get underneath some of this complexity. In doing so I am turning towards surfacing perceptions of legitimacy that have been formulated from outside of the archive, from individuals and collectives not directly involved in the archive's creation.

There is a distancing that occurs when you stand up in front of an audience who do not know you in a personal capacity. In those moments you become anonymized. With no relation around which to formulate a judgment, you are weighed up instead by your words in conjunction with labels that the audience pick up on and apply as a means to contextualize you. These labels have typifications and generalizations attached. I became aware that there were two labels circulating around me as I co-presented with Dolly on this occasion. These labels were emerging as frames in which the whole conference was being read and problematized by the audience. The first label was 'non-survivor', and the second label was 'academic'. The understandable wall of frustration (described in chapter 8) that was building in amongst survivor sections of the audience was around the academic framing of the conference. The squeezing of survivor voice, knowledge and experience into the margins was tangibly *felt* as a tension in the air. Cresswell and Spandler (2009, 2013) use 'psychopolitics', a term that originates with Peter Sedgwick (1982), to refer to the psy-disciplines as a 'field of contention' (Crossley, 2005, 2006), characterized by struggles over identity claims and the distribution of public resources

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy (Cresswell and Spandler, 2013, p.139). Standing in front of the audience at the Alternative Psychiatric Narratives Conference the contested nature of the field was no longer an abstract concept to me. I felt the weight of that contestation in a personal way. My/our position, and the positioning of the archive within the field of contestation, was under consideration. I describe that scrutiny in my journal in the following terms:

I think this is the first time I have stood up to present in such a charged atmosphere...their gaze was sweeping over me seeking to discern if I was part of the problem (Journal, 19 May 2014).

The positivity of my relationship with the contributors, their acceptance of me, and our joint enjoyment of working together, had, up until this point been a cushion around me, preventing me from appreciating the contestation surrounding what we were seeking to achieve. I spoke first, introducing the archive, showing parts of the stories it contains, talking about our motivations for creating it, and what we were hoping to achieve in the way of dialogue around 'voice' in mental health archives. I record in my journal how overall, I felt that the audience's initial wariness and hostility gave way to a perceptible softening as I talked through my own section on the site, my own story of 'post-natal depression' as well as other aspects of me that drew me to wanting to work on the archive. This softening continued as Dolly spoke about her reflections on constructing the archive. The softening extended after the conference to an immensely positive and enabling interaction with a survivor researcher called Jasna Russo, who hospitably and generously offered me feedback on the archive alongside a recommendation to read Church's work, which as described in Chapter 6, has been a crucially formative read for me. Jasna was responding to my embedding of myself as a person into the archive, seeing it as an indication of 'deep engagement'. This was leading her to legitimize me as (in her words) a 'real ally, as opposed to a declared one'. Jasna went on to ask Dolly and I to contribute a joint chapter around our reflections of working together for her forthcoming edited volume, *Searching for a Rose Garden*, and I feel profoundly privileged to have been given the opportunity to do so.

However, there wasn't just one reaction to the archive emanating from survivor sections of the audience. I am pointing to an overall perceptible shift towards a softening and an embrace, but there was a complex set of reactions occurring, and in this chapter I want to surface and explore some of those layers of reaction as I experienced them at the conference. It was those layers of reaction that made me come away, despite the positive

interaction with Jasna, with a feeling of discomfort. My journal voices the troubling that occurred for me following our presentation:

It is not the perceptible distrust. It is not the scrutinizing gaze. I understand where that is coming from. My discomfort is that I am not sure if I have the right to look the audience in the eye. I am not sure if I *am* part of the problem. Do I as a non-survivor have the right to encroach in on the representation of psychiatric survivor experience? Is there any justification to me creating the archive?...Do well meaning outsiders like me just compound the issues around representation and voice? And more troubling for me is that I am beginning to wonder - what is the point of voice in the archives if it is disconnected from collective political action in the mental health field? Does it not remain disappointingly apolitical? I feel like everything is unraveling in front of me, and my own perception of the legitimacy of what I/we set out to do has dissolved in front of my eyes (Journal, 19 May 2014).

Why was I so unsettled by the conference? Why was my journaling after the event filled with anxiety? Looking back over the pages, I clearly felt that my legitimacy had been called into question, and that was in turn causing a crisis in my own perception of both my credibility and the credibility of the archive. The conferral of legitimacy is a complex interplay. At the same time that one aspect of my approach appeared to be gaining approval, there were other perceptible undercurrents of concern that were embedded in the questions after the presentation, and the wider discussions at the conference that unsettle any simplistic notions around legitimation being conferred to me/us/the archive from survivors in the audience. There were two related undercurrents of concern that were perceptible to me, which I will introduce into this chapter. The first was a question as to whether it is counter-productive for a non-survivor connected to a mainstream institution to create a space for survivor history to be constructed, given that spaces already exist created by survivors themselves. Secondly, there was a question over the level at which the archive sought participation and the extent to which seeking individualistic as opposed to collective engagement is counter-productive to its desire to engage in activism, and bring about change.

### **Mental Health Survivor History**

The work of the grassroots Survivor History Group (SHG) is an example of an existing space in which mental health survivors have voice and ownership over their story and their archive. Their ethos is summarized in their manifesto as seeking to:

Highlight the diversity and creativity of the service user/survivor contribution through personal accounts, writings, poetry, art, music, drama, photography, campaigning, speaking influencing...[We intend to] collect, collate and preserve service user/survivor history, make service user/survivor history accessible to all who are interested in or studying mental health, use our history to inform and improve the future, [and] operate as an independent group. The independence of any archive we set up is necessary to prevent limited access to such a resource and to expose the deliberate loss of history – in particular the lived experience of psychiatric system survivors....Our basic founding principle is that service users own their own history (Survivor History Group, 2006).

The SHG can be described as a community archive in the sense that it is a space that has been created, maintained and controlled by community members within their community: by survivors, for survivors '*on their own terms*' (Stevens et al, 2010). In this way, the work of the SHG is political and subversive (Flinn and Stevens, 2009) and acts as a direct challenge to the dominant voices presiding over representations of their story. Running through the group's online presentation of their own history and activities is a strong sense of the ways in which their history has suffered when written in the hands of others. The group sees their history as an opposition to narrative written by non-survivors (mainly academics). It is a vehicle that simultaneously points to, and redresses, the lack of acknowledgement by the academic community of the existence of survivor-led historical research. Roberts (2010) provides insight into the group's perception of the difference between their history and their story as told by others:

There appears to be two streams of research: a survivor stream and an academic stream. An example of this: In 1990 two survivor historians, Judi Chamberlin and Rae Unzicker published "Psychiatric Survivors Ex-Patients and Users: An observation of organizations in Holland and England". This survey tends not to be noted in academic publications. In 1991, academics Anne Rogers and David Pilgrim published "'Pulling down churches': accounting for the British mental health users' movement". This contains a survey of the movement which is almost always noted in academic publications. What accounts for the salience of the academic's work and the invisibility of survivor research? The two papers' above may give us a clue to one factor: Rogers and Pilgrim's paper is strong on theoretical context. It analyses the mental health use as a "new social movement"...the empirical quality of the survivor history research stream has been stronger than the academic stream. Social science academics place a very high value on critical theory and frequently criticize concern for empirical accuracy. Survivor historians tend to place an equally strong value on getting our empirical descriptions right and even avoiding theory (unpaginated).

Further, insight into survivor perspectives on the importance of survivor control over survivor history can be traced through the SHG's documentation of the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bedlham. This anniversary took place in 1997, and was marked by the creation of an



institutionally curated exhibition on the hospital's history, exhibited at the Museum of London along with three days of associated celebrations at Bethlem Hospital. These celebrations included a staff ball, a family fun day [family spectacular], and a separate thanksgivings service at St Paul's Cathedral which all took place in the summer of 1997. Peter Beresford offers an insightful critique of the exhibition, first published in *OpenMind* in May/June 1998, reproduced by the SHG in their online archive. His critique is woven into a powerful (and for me) convincing rhetoric around the necessity of survivors controlling their own history:

We might have expected that a history that from its earliest days reveals a familiar catalogue of inquiries, scandals, abuse and inhumanity would be approached with the same sadness and solemnity as any other past inhumanity or oppression. Instead it has become an opportunity, complete with commemorative mug, keyring, paper clip and teeshirt, for reinforcing professional pride and the brand identity of a medical product which by its users accounts has more to correct than to be proud of. Perhaps most disturbing of all has been its associated exhibition. This is presented in classic modernist terms of centuries of progress, culminating in modern psychiatry and the Maudsley Hospital. It is made all the worse because it is given the respectability of being housed in the Museum of London, which generally shows a sensitivity to issues of difference and discrimination. The current psychiatric orthodoxy that 'genes contribute to most mental illness' is presented as fact. The experience of thousands of inmates is reduced to a handful of indecipherable photographs posed in hospital wards and grounds, and select biographies of the famous and curious few... The commemoration and exhibition are disturbing snapshots of how powerful dominant versions of psychiatry remain, despite the emergence of survivors organizations and movements. They offer a warning, but it is one which survivors and mental health service users' organizations are heeding. One of the good things that has come out of the commemoration has been the direct action by survivors, and the news coverage that it has sparked. This is just one expression of a much bigger survivors' culture which has flowered in recent years, reflected in our own poetry, art, photography and creative writing, our own accounts and biographies, our own analyses, evaluations and training materials - and our own histories of ourselves and our movement. But the Bedlam revival... is a reminder of just how much more survivors still have to do, with less power, credibility and money than the psychiatric system (Beresford, 1998 reproduced in Survivor History Group, 1998).

Beresford's argument was that:

If mental health service users/survivors are to take charge of our future, then we must regain control of our past. That past, at both individual and collective levels, has largely been appropriated, denied, controlled and reinterpreted by other powerful interests, notably medical professionals, the state, politicians, charitable organizations and the media. This has been destructive to all our futures. In recent years, the survivors' movement has begun to challenge this rewriting of our history (Beresford, 1998 reproduced in Survivor History Group, 1998).

For Beresford, a possible solution would come through the reclamation of a former asylum

institution as a space for survivor history:

One of these institutions should be preserved as living testimony of the experience of the generations who lived and died within their walls. There have already been some attempts to create institutional museums, for example, at the Stanley Royd Hospital, the old 'West Yorkshire Pauper Lunatic Asylum' and at Calderstones Hospital. But what, crucially, should distinguish this initiative is that it is planned, established and run under the control of psychiatric system survivors and our organizations. Then the possibility of perpetuating professional accounts or becoming another peep show is minimized. It could also build on work that survivors have already done, putting together our accounts in exhibitions, books, news and broadcast media. Such a memorial could collect and house: the accounts and testimony of psychiatric system survivors over the years; a developing archive of survivor material; survivors' mementoes; and artifacts of psychiatry and its institutions...For some survivors, the idea of retaining the bricks and mortar of even one psychiatric hospital may be too painful and they want them all razed to the ground. This view demands respect, but will future generations be able to conceive of what these grim institutions were really like, without any presence to remind them? Could survivors, if they had not experienced them? Wouldn't it have been easier to deny the holocaust if the remains of the extermination camps had been destroyed, as the Nazis intended? Such institutions are the embodiment of both the failure and the cruelty of the medical model of madness. Reclaiming one as a home for our history gives us an opportunity to tell our truths; to show how badly psychiatry failed, and to ensure that there can be no going back (Beresford, 1998 reproduced in Survivor History Group, 1998).

Beresford's desired reclaiming of a former asylum has never transpired into a reality, which, in and of itself, speaks back into the asymmetries in power facing the survivor movement when seeking control over their own history. To have and maintain control is a fight that they undertake, as Beresford suggests, with 'less power, credibility and money' than other institutions that have been able to lay claim to this ground. Beresford's aspirations were tied into The Reclaim Bedlam campaign, which was closely associated with the Mad Pride movement. An Evening Standard Magazine article, written by Seaton 17 March 2000, quotes Peter Shaughnessy as a leading survivor activist within the Reclaim Bedlam movement talking about the active survivor-led demonstrations that took place in protest of the anniversary's presentation of asylum history:

'I was involved in the Maudsley at the time,' recalls Pete Shaughnessy, a leading survivor activist. 'They came and talked to us, as an afterthought, and said we'll have a "Users' Day" on the third day. I thought that was really token, that we were tacked on at the end of this really naff event. And then they said we're having a Thanksgiving Service at St Paul's, and I think that's probably when I snapped. We called that a Commemoration, for the people who have died and the sadness they've lived in.' The first events were counter-demonstrations to Bedlam's anniversary celebrations: a rally and march from the Imperial War Museum to the Maudsley in Camberwell; and a picket of the service at St Paul's, which involved a minute's silence on the steps outside.

The level of anger surrounding the protests is not fully captured or explored in the Evening Standard Magazine article but it does resonate within the SHG's documentation of events where Peter Shaugnessey is quoted in the following description of the Reclaim Bedlham protests:

"We spoke at Reclaim the Streets and political events. We gatecrashed conferences... I know we pissed users off with our style". A picket of the staff ball and following "Fun Day" (Family Spectacular) was planned. However, when Pete heard that users were willing to cross the picket line in order to run a stall at the Family Spectacular - "I lost my nut, which meant I threatened to bring Reclaim the Streets down to smash up their stall." The police were called and the pickets had to be called off (Survivor History Group, 1997a).

Shaugnessey's reaction as depicted in the SHG documentation verges on violence. This cannot by any means be interpreted as indicative of a broader collective reaction amongst survivors either within the Reclaim Bedlham movement or the SHG. In fact, the SHG timeline describes 1997 as being remembered for 'conflicts in survivor culture which continue to provide foci for debate' (Survivor History Group, 1997b). I incorporate Shaugnessey's depicted reaction here as a means to illustrate the strength of feeling, and the depth of the contestation that is associated with this fundamental issue of independence in relation to survivor history. Morrison (2005) researching voice in mental health contexts, draws on Scott (1990) to talk about the moments in which 'stifled anger, and bitten tongues created by relations of domination find' their 'vehement full-throated expression' (p.120). The strength of feeling associated with the argument around the unique difference that independently created survivor history offers in comparison to other versions of the story, and the necessity of creating this 'different' history, along with the strong notion that such a history created by survivors can also be best cared for, most nurtured and made most widely available through independence resonates strongly with the motivations, positions, values and beliefs found in many other grass-roots community archive contexts (Flinn et al, 2009; X et al, 2009; Katz, 1976; Bastian, 2003; Nestle, 1990; Wolfe, 1998; Punzalan 2009). Creating, collecting and curating embodies 'the symbolic power to order knowledge, to rank, classify and arrange, and to give meaning to objects and things, through the imposition of interpretative schemas, scholarship and the authority of connoisseurship' (Hall, 2005, p.24). Given the power inherent in creating, collecting and curating, I am utterly convinced of the necessity for communities like SHG, and related survivor groups, to claim archival and related cultural spaces, and to do so on their own terms. I would seek to position myself as a supporter of this perspective.

The uncomfortable question that was surfacing for me through my attendance at the Alternative Psychiatric Narratives Conference was the extent to which creating a new archival space for the individual with lived experience to find voice within, was in opposition to the work of SHG and other related survivor groups concerned with historical representation of survivor history, particularly given the link from our archival space back to the mainstream Wellcome Library. I was aware of the SHG when I first began to look into archival representations of mental health for this PhD, yet I didn't make contact with them. There is a silence in my journal on this issue. Although, I know I looked at their website (when I had a blank(ish) canvas and choices over what direction to take my proposed participatory intervention in) and I know I thought about whether I should contact them at least for feedback on my plans and even as a potential partner. I know that I consciously decided not to contact them either as a sounding board or as a potential collective collaborator. My lack of reflection around this in my journal, the silence, the refusal to think too deeply around it and to trouble that decision is a point to reflect on in itself. I believe I didn't make contact in those early stages because of how I interpreted their position from their literature and archive. I positioned them as a group who strongly (and resolutely) valued their independence. Their distance from the mainstream was obviously and clearly articulated through their manifesto as fundamental to their politics and their endeavor. I was also very aware of my own uncertain positioning at the Wellcome, and relied on my instinctive knowledge of the complexity that would be enacted through the contact in relation to negotiating or establishing a relationship with a collective when I am neither fully inside or fully outside of the Wellcome, unable to fully represent the Wellcome and act on their behalf, but not distanced from them either. I was aware of the contention that the Wellcome's historic link to the pharmaceutical industry (through Henry Wellcome) would cause, and I knew that establishing a relationship, if indeed one could be established, would be a lengthy trust building exercise which I simply couldn't undertake on the Wellcome's behalf. I knew to do so would require upfront commitment and long term buy-in from the Wellcome to even begin an initiation. I believe it is for those reasons that I did not orientate myself towards pushing on that door. Is the archive in opposition to the work of SHG, and related protest groups and the perspectives they embody? Is the archive of mental health recovery stories an encroachment on their space and political aspirations? Although I would like to read it as complimentary to their work, in recognition that archives are rivalrous (Chapter 2, p.43) I have to live with the possibility that it can be perceived as such.

On a different trajectory, I also ask myself whether my reading and interpretation of the SHG's position, and consequent decision to maintain distance, was in itself a mistake. Had I based my decision on an overly simplistic reading of their collective positioning that did not take into account the complex layers of individually situated positions from which the group is comprised? Did I close myself off to opportunity without due consideration of the likelihood of a nuanced range of perspectives inherent within the group in relation to mainstream institutional (and non-survivor) involvement in creating, collecting and caring for survivor history? A later meeting with Andrew Roberts (one of the founders of SHG) at the launch of the MIND archive at the Wellcome (described in Chapter 10) brought home to me that the group, as a collective, do of course hold a multiplicity of perspectives on these issues, and some including Andrew Roberts himself choose to take a pragmatic perspective that is tentatively open to the possibility of collaboration. Consequently opting *not* to at least create a dialogue with the group on these issues now feels like a missed opportunity.

### **Mental Health Survivor Activism**

From within the mental health survivor movement, the notion of giving voice to individuals with lived experience is intimately connected into the enablement of survivor-led research initiatives, which are in turn intimately connected to, and bound up in, the service user movement. This is summed up by Rose & Beresford (2009), in the following terms:

Early efforts to carry out survivor research had minimal funding and were generally under resourced. They frequently relied on the enthusiasm and commitment of early pioneers. User/survivor research was closely aligned with the service user movement. People active in the movement who had research skills wanted to use those skills to contribute to the aims of the survivor movement. They took their research agenda from the priorities of the movement, and developed methodologies appropriate to the questions that arise for them. They wished also to involve other service users because they did not see research as an elite endeavor...survivor research...has created new knowledge, provided a knowledge base for change by mental health service users/survivors, challenged the assumptions of traditional research and theory, and developed its own new methods and approaches (p.3).

At the Alternative Psychiatric Narratives Conference, I was struck (and in fact deeply affected) by a comment that was made by one member of the audience, who said as a response to the archive that it would be impossible for her to contribute to something like our archive because her voice cannot be separated from the survivor movement in which it has been shaped, and in which it can be most effectively used. Her insight prompted me to begin to trouble the individualistic life history approach

that I/we had adopted in the archive and the fact that taking this approach could be interpreted as holding the potential to disconnect the story of the individual from a collective (community or movement-based) narrative. This disconnection is potentially problematic because it is *in* the collective that the individual experience becomes most powerful as a force for change. I was therefore faced with a concern that I hadn't considered up until that point- that in taking an individualistic approach to building the archive, I/we were potentially *de-politicizing* the contributors' stories.

Crossley's (2006) research explores the rise and fall of social movements in the field of psychiatric contention from 1960-2000. In contextualizing his research, Crossley argues that during the eighteenth century the mental health field was characterized by an enacted struggle for control between medical, legal and religious agents (Bushfield, 1986; Porter, 1987, Scull, 1993 in Crossley, 2006, p.554). The nineteenth century brought with it a move from private madhouses to public asylums, and with this move came the dominance of the medical profession, which secured hegemony for its practice and legitimation for its schemas of classification (Porter, 1987; Scull, 1993 in Crossley, 2006). Despite hegemony, competition between newly forming and emerging psy-disciplines characterized the struggle, until the 1960s when 'conflicts erupted that burst the boundaries of the mental health field, refusing to play its game and thereby giving rise to a distinct (if interrelated) field of psychiatric contention' (p.554). Crossley (2006) suggests that there were four distinct trajectories within what he describes as the psychiatric field of contention: the anti-psychiatric trajectory, the survivor trajectory, the civil rights trajectory and the paternalistic trajectory' (p.554). Each of these was represented (at the national level) by a variety of social movement organizations and/or individual agents. Within the survivor trajectory, Crossley characterizes the Mental Patients Union (MPU) as the first key social movement to emerge from the contention. Spandler (2006) describes the MPU as 'an organization of mental patients and their allies who campaigned and organized against psychiatric treatment and incarceration'. Spandler (2006) suggests that what makes the MPU categorizable as the first patient instigated social movement, and therefore distinct from earlier instigations of patient activism such as the 1620 Bedlham patient petition and the 1846 Alleged Lunatics Friends Society, was its aims and its scope. Spandler argues that:

The formation of a social movement is usually located at the point at which a large, collective, political movement of some force emerges, broadening its aims from a focus on parliamentary reform to a wider challenge to prevailing social and cultural perceptions about the issue in question. For example, the AFLS focused on a legal

struggle for certain individuals not to be labeled insane and campaigned against their incarceration. Groups like MPU moved towards a broader focus, which challenged the very existence of madness itself and the ways in which particular groups of people were pathologized in the psychiatric system (p.52).

Spandler's (2006) research, which includes interviews with founding members of the MPU, draws out how the MPU was founded in recognition of a common experience of oppression. The movement sought to build a solidarity between those that had been 'caught on the same hook', a metaphor that was encapsulated in an early movement pamphlet which became known as the 'fish pamphlet' within movement circles. The fish pamphlet was a move to draw attention to the ways in which 'an individual's valid attempts to deal with distress or disturbance caused by particular social circumstances can be misunderstood as illness or psychiatrized' (Spandler, 2006, p.55). It was solidarity in oppression that was the seed for actively posing a challenge to such oppression. This solidarity became a consolidated force in March 1973 when the first public meeting 'Is psychiatry social repression?: The case for a Mental Patients Union' was held at the Paddington Day Hospital. This meeting drew 150 attendees, 100 of which were reportedly patients or ex-patients (Spandler, 2006, p.56). It was at that moment that 'reaction gave way to pro-action' (Crossley, 1999 in Spandler 2006, p.56) and solidarity translated into a joined up political agenda to instigate change. In this way, both Spandler (2006) and Crossley (1999) argue that the MPU provided the footprint for subsequent patient/service user/survivor instigated movements. It paved the way for the emergence of survivor activism where solidarity in shared experience leads to overtly political moves for transformation of the status quo (Curtis et al, 2000 in Spandler, 2006).

The MPU folded in the late 1970s, but its continuation can be traced through activist networks some of which are still in existence today (Spandler, 2006, p.65). The mid 1980s saw the emergence of the Nottingham Advocacy Group and Survivors Speak Out (Campbell 1996, 1999). In fact, Sweeney (2009) argues that it was the emergence of Survivors Speak Out that established the start of the 'modern mental health user movement' (p.23). Spandler (2006) draws a link between the MPU and the establishment of PROMPT (Protection of the Rights of Mental Patients in Treatment/Therapy), and CAPO (Campaign against Psychiatric Oppression) as well as groups like Survivors Speak Out, the Self Harm Network, the Hearing Voices Network, and Mad Pride (Spandler, 2006, p.65-66). Whether the MPU, or later activist networks such as Survivors Speak Out, are centralized in the narrative of the mental health user movement, these groups find a common ground as invocations of comradeship in shared experience leading to action to

bring about individual and collective empowerment alongside systemic change.

Crossley and Crossley (2001) surface how patient/service user/survivor activism at a collective level has wrought fundamental changes to the tone and language in which service users/survivors can now speak. By comparing instances of that 'voice' from the 1950s and the 1990s, Crossley and Crossley (2001) powerfully demonstrate how the survivor 'voice' has itself been actively shaped in and through the collective coming together of individuals who share a common identity. Drawing on Crossley and Crossley's research, Spandler (2006) suggests that the move from an 'individualized to a collectivized voice' has brought with it a tangible shift in the language and discourse in and through which survivors can constitute their identity and their experience, moving from 'shame to pride; plea to rights; and from I to we' (Spandler, 2006, p.64). This brings home, in a very profound way, the comment made to me at the 'Alternative Psychiatric Narrative Conference' by a member of the audience who said 'you cannot separate my voice from the movement in which it has been shaped'.

Sweeney (2009) suggests that across these invocations of service user activism there are shared concerns, yet the user movement cannot and does not constitute a single user voice and recognition of this has led to a centralization of a philosophy of choice, self determination and individual and collective empowerment. Turner and Beresford (2009) argue that survivor-led research is positioned from within these movements, it envisions itself as accountable to movement members, and it embraces the founding principles of the collective user movement: 'empowerment, emancipation, participation, equality and anti-discrimination' (Turner and Beresford, 2005 in Sweeney et al, 2009, p.23).

Sweeney's (2009) account of survivor-led research draws on the writing of Oliver (1997) who writes as a disability activist. Of profound interest to me is the fact that Oliver has strenuously sought to distance the disability movement from the tenets of PAR approaches which in his words have 'tended to reinforce existing power structures rather than challenge or confront, let alone change them' (Oliver, 1997, p.27 in Sweeney, 2009, p.27). Oliver's depiction of his experiences of disability-focused participatory approaches draws out and surfaces the tendency within participatory action research to focus almost exclusively on addressing micro, local, bounded issues of exclusion whilst leaving macro societal exclusion untouched and untroubled. He calls for a move towards a more joined up approach, which he refers



to as *Emancipatory Disability Research*,<sup>14</sup> which by being embedded firmly and unequivocally in the disability movement, enacted by and for its members, can recognize that no one single project can be fully emancipatory, but rather that individual projects can build to a *collective* body of knowledge that can begin to challenge exclusion at both macro *and* micro levels. Sweeney (2009) suggests that emancipatory research, as envisioned from within the disability movement, resonates strongly with mental health service user/survivor research, voice, and activism. Relating this survivor perspective back to the Archive of Mental Health Recovery Stories raises questions of the legitimacy of its embedded process and outcomes. Does its disconnection from a survivor-led movement severely limit its ability to be effective in bringing about change? In relation to its potential to influence *systemic change* in the field of mental health, I would suggest that this is inevitably the case. As I have sought to step into this perspective, I have gained a clearer sense of the archive's limitations. Our archive's marginal position in the mental health field, and disconnection from survivor-led activism means that its transformatory impact *on* the mental health field is negligible. From a perspective where such change is a key driver, our process and product is less (or perhaps not at all) desirable, proper and appropriate, or in other words legitimate. In stepping into this perspective, I am now more conscious of the possibility of a rupture in the archive between the individual and collective, and the potential consequences that this rupture creates in limiting the political force of the archive, and I am more conscious of the archive's marginality within the field of mental health. I am troubled, unsettled, and uncomfortably situated in this perspective because it forces me to confront the question of whether the archive as process and product can in any way live up to the transformative claims embedded in the participatory rhetoric that I have sought to enact. It forces out into the open the fundamental question: transformative of what? And for whom?

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<sup>14</sup> In my tracing of the rise of rhetoric around 'emancipatory research' through the disability literature, I have found that it in fact echoes the trajectory of rhetoric around 'participatory action research' that I have followed through other bodies of literature. At first, 'emancipatory research' is heralded as the answer by making distinctions around what makes it distinct from other forms of research. In the case of emancipatory research, this distinction is around linking individual micro efforts at transformation, instigated by the disability movement, together in a way that can be transformatory at a macro level. However, the initial confidence in this new way of thinking about participation and emancipation gives way to a troubling of its central notions through application in practice where the constraints and limitations of the approach become exposed. In the disability literature there has therefore been contestation around the notion of 'emancipatory research' in which it has come to be viewed as a realistic goal by some and an impossible dream by others (Oliver, 1997), with the latter camp arguing that the utopian vision embedded in the rhetoric is yet to be matched to meaningful outcomes (Barnes, 2002).

## Contributor reflections

### *Extract from Interview with Dolly Sen, 29 July 2014*

Who is to say the voice of survivor groups is the voice of survivors? They are usually filled with very articulate white middle class people who have mental distress but have privilege so they will be speaking from that perspective. They can't speak for people who can't speak, or are too shy to speak, or who feel their words are meaningless. Unless you include every single person in the country, including groups and individuals, it is still not enough so where do you draw the line?...Also each group has their own agenda so it's not where is the archive of power and truth, it's where is the archive of what we want you to know. You can't win Anna!

### *Extract from Interview with Andrew Joyce, 29 May 2015*

Anna: I am interested in the idea of social movements around mental health, the survivor movement for example, have you ever been involved in any of those networks or groups, which are specifically orientated to activism and bringing about change to the mental health system?

Andrew: I haven't been radicalized no (laughter). One of the things that goes along with living in a backwater in East Sussex, is there aren't any radical service users down there. There isn't a body of radical service users. To be associated with organizations like 'Survivors Speak Out' most definitely happens more easily if you are in London. I don't have options to be involved on the more radical side. In the first stage of community care in East Sussex we had a group called Vision 2000, which shows how old it was because we were looking forward to the year 2000, and quite a lot of people were suspicious of it, of allowing service user involvement. It fizzled out [...]. I do stay in touch with some service user orientated organizations like Mental Fight Club. About three years ago I came up with my friend and we went to their St George's day. I do try and keep up my links but the travel distances make it difficult and we don't have any radical service user orientated movements where I live. I ran one for a while. A social enterprise called Creative Bexhill, and as a mark of our radical approach we wrote songs like 'Jesus has left the asylum' which were certainly revolutionary, but we didn't get our funding renewed so we wound it down in an orderly fashion. So my only involvement in more radical service user activism is just receiving emails.

Anna: There are people that may feel that the voice of survivors needs to stay within the collective, within the movement that has given rise to its existence, and that actually, in separating it out from that it loses its power because it is removed from the collective and from its roots.

Andrew: I think it's [a] valid [perspective]. The service user voice should remain with service users connected to radical politics, but then that is the luxury of living in a metropolis, you can take that point of view if you are at the heart of that movement, but in other places, we haven't had that opportunity. There isn't any sort of collective service user voice to speak of where I am. If I look back over the trajectory of it from my perspective, we had a degree of service user voice following on from the 1990 act on community care, we built on that and we had service user

meetings, we had service user charters, service user committees, we had a whole load of things, then the focus changed towards partnership and stake-holding and more amorphous ideas. We had some unfortunate events with service user involvement, and so a bureaucratic decision was made to take away service user charters where I was, but the telling thing is that no one really noticed. Did we really have a vibrant group of service users where I lived where I can say I found my voice? No.

Anna: Do you think the archive is giving that voice, or is it in competition with that voice?

Andrew: I think it is that voice, in a post-structuralist perspective the voice is where it interacts with other people, it isn't a discrete entity on its own. Having the archive enables the user voice to come alive in a new and [in a] different context and it is very valid in that way. The archive doesn't come from a different perspective, it isn't a challenge or in competition to the voice that emerges from active groups like Survivors Speak Out, it's coming from the same perspective. The archive fulfills a function in promoting the service user voice.

*Extract from Interview with Peter Bullimore, 1 May 2015*

Anna: Peter, you have been heavily involved in a number of grass roots networks like the Hearing Voices Network, and of course you are one of the co-founders of the Paranoia Network, and the relationship between your personal story and the history of these movements comes out in the archive doesn't it?

Peter: Yes I think it does Anna. Getting involved in the Hearing Voices Network was a turning point for me. It's there in the archive - how before I got involved in the network the general message from services that I was getting was basically- you've got this degenerative mental health problem and you will have to take drugs for the rest of your life and you will never ever work again. So a very negative, your life is over, attitude. I was basically being told, you are going to be stuck in this system, you are going to be dependent on other people all your life. But through the Hearing Voices Network I was introduced to a different perspective. Firstly, as I say, I think in my narrative, the first network meeting I went to, I was bowled over by the fact that there were people who heard voices like me who were articulate, clean shaven, respectable human beings. Not like me at that point, because the system had turned me into the archetypal schizophrenic. I didn't wash, I didn't shave, I was a mess. So that in itself was an eye opener. And then I read 'Accepting Voices' by Marius Romme and Sandra Escher, and to me that was the most powerful book I read at that time. It normalized voices – they are not the sign of a mental illness, they are a reaction to life events. The voices are messengers, bringing you messages about awful things that have happened, but don't shoot the messenger because they are talking about things that have happened in your life, things that you haven't dealt with [...]the link to trauma made in that book is overwhelming [...]It changed how I see myself and my voices, so yes my story is weaved into the network and to Marius' work.

Anna: Do you think- well what I am puzzling through at the moment is- well do you think it is ok that the archive of mental health recovery stories, in some senses takes your story out of the context of the network?

Peter: I am not sure I follow you, takes it out of context in what way?

Anna: Well, I think what I am getting at is that the archive is built around our individual narratives, and does that create problems because it disassociates your story from the collectives that have shaped you and that you in turn have shaped?

Peter: Well the link is still there though isn't it? That link comes through in the archive.

Anna: Yes it does, but do you think your story in the context of the archive loses some of its political potential because it isn't part of the collective story of the movements you are associated with?

Peter: It has a different political potential, placing my narrative in your archive was about speaking into archives, into history, into the Wellcome and from there back into the mental health system. My story exists in lots of places, and in each place it can have a different affect. Am I answering your question?

Anna: Yes you are answering it very well considering I can't seem to express it very coherently! I think I am just aware of some of the criticisms leveled at the archive, that in its aim to give 'voice' to individuals with lived experience, it is encroaching on ground already created by activist movements, and that disconnecting 'voice' from activism is problematic. I mean, the place where your voice has biggest impact isn't in the archive is it? It's in all the ongoing mental health consultancy work that you do, and it's in your ongoing involvement with the Hearing Voices Network and the Paranoia Network.

Peter: Maybe, probably, but does it have to be either or? Why not spread my voice around as much as possible! [laughter].

Dolly's and Andrew's reflections draw attention to the fact that the survivor movement(s) are themselves constituted in a set of power relations which inevitably means that some voices become central and powerful whilst others remain at the margins. For Andrew, his connection into survivor/service user activism has been minimal due to his spatial distance from the hub of service user/survivor activism. To align representation efforts with the collective inevitably results in many voices and experiences remaining on the periphery. As recognized by survivor activists, there is no one single survivor voice, there is no 'one' collective that will claim universal representation.

Peter questions the necessity of seeing different spaces which constitute and enable 'voice' as oppositional and in competition with each other, choosing instead to frame the different places in which his story resides as complimentary spaces serving different purposes. His reflections also surface the fact that in the archive there isn't a complete

rupture between his personal story and its place within the collective narrative of the network, there is an intersection within his narrative between the two, there is still a recognition in his story of the ways in which he has been shaped through his participation in the collective.

### Feeling stuck

What I am circling around here in seeking to confront perceptions of legitimacy in relation to the archive of mental health recovery stories, what I think I am struggling to surface, is the distinction between the 'voice' in the archive of mental health recovery stories and the 'voice' that is activated in and through instances of survivor activism. I am trying to disentangle the *difference* in order to understand how perceptions of legitimacy then tie in and relate to this difference. In trying to unravel the fundamental *differences* between these voices, I have become somewhat stuck in comparing the 'voice' in the archive to the 'voice' in survivor activism by constructing an individual vs collective dichotomy. Buried in my conversation with Peter is my own growing neurosis that my/our approach was too individualistic in its orientation and trajectory, and that because I/we were primarily focused on telling autonomous individual stories that then merged to create the 'collective' voice of 'the contributors to the mental health recovery archive', then this is distinct and somehow less effective than the process of developing voice/voices that is embedded in instances of survivor activism. Yet creating an individual vs collective dichotomy has begun to feel like a dead end in understanding what I intuitively sense as *difference*, because in fact all instances of voice whether spoken predominantly as 'I', or joined together from the outset as 'we', necessarily operate simultaneously at an individual and collective level. An individual voice is never autonomously created, it is socially constructed as a 'specification' of 'collective history' (Bourdieu, 1993), and a joined up collective 'voice' necessarily functions in and through individuals. This is perhaps why my line of questioning, my anxiety and neurosis over the 'individualism' embedded in the archive made no sense to Peter. Perhaps then, what I intuitively perceive as a *difference in potential* is connected more to the strength and extent to which the individuals within the collective tie the shaping and making of their individual 'voice' back into the collective. In survivor activism is there a closer integration of the individual and collective identity perhaps? Is it true to say that the collective 'voice' in the archive of mental health recovery stories doesn't so obviously feed back into shaping and making the habitus of the individuals involved? If so, does this make the collective voice emerging from the archive less connected, more disparate and therefore weaker as a force for change? Perhaps there is an element of truth in that

suggestion, yet I don't feel I am pushing into knowledge or developing a coherent line of argument by using an individual vs collective lens.

I have found it more helpful to tease out the *distinctions* by thinking about relational spaces using Bourdieu's concepts of fields (as contexts for action) as a means to articulate the difference. It is the difference in *positioning* that is perhaps most useful to surface and explore as a means of disentangling questions of legitimacy. The fields in which the archive sits and its relative positioning in those fields become its 'context[s] for action' (Crossley, 2001, p.97), and these contexts can also be interpreted as the spheres in which the archive and its voice can have influence. As I have already begun to disentangle in this chapter, there are two primary fields in which the archive seeks to maintain a position and exert an influence: the archival field and the mental health field. I as instigator dictate the positioning. I am embedded in the archival field, and I have been central to the process. It is therefore the archival field where the archive carries the most potential to be impactful. This is evidenced in Appendix D, which provides a list of talks that have been undertaken in relation to the archive of mental health recovery stories. It illustrates that I have been involved in all of the dissemination activities, and most have taken place in the archival field. The archival field has been the dominant context for action, drawing the contributors in from the field of mental health to make a difference to archival representation. Here, I am questioning the degree to which it is possible to claim that the archive in fact occupies *any* direct position in the field of mental health at all. My lack of connection to the mental health field coupled with my influence over the trajectory of the archive, has meant that despite wanting to use the collective 'voice' in the archive to 'speak back' directly to mental health professionals and influence the mental health system as *well* as influencing representations of mental health within the archival field, we found it almost impossible to get a purchase on establishing a presence or an influence with mental health professionals, and our attempts to do so through the launch of the archive, dissipated almost instantly. Yet instances of voice connected to survivor activism arise *directly* in the mental health field and therefore as that is the dominant context for action, this voice necessarily holds a greater degree of potential to bring about systemic change in that field.

In relation to the archive's positioning *within* the archival field, because of my relational link to the Wellcome Library, the archive is positioned within the mainstream, as a means to challenge and unsettle mainstream metanarratives around mental health. There is then an arising contention over the degree to which this positioning *within* the mainstream is perceived to be a legitimate space for oppositional survivor voices to occupy. As surfaced

in this chapter, the archive of mental health recovery stories can be compared to the SHG who represent a collective 'survivor voice' that also seeks to be impactful in the archival field. For the SHG, their challenge to mainstream archival representation is tied into their independent position. The tension for groups such as SHG, is that independence from the mainstream is deemed necessary to maintain control over representation and avoid appropriation. Yet this independence can reinforce a marginal status. Independence can mean a lack of recognition, and this lack of recognition can translate into limited access to resources. The result is that the mainstream representation remains dominant. The tension is also felt by archivists operating within the mainstream, who recognize their complicity in reinforcing and upholding existing power relations in the archive, and seek to address the biases in archival representation, but find that the legitimacy of their attempts to be more broadly representative *within* the archive, are necessarily always contestable and open to challenge. It is useful to surface here from Swartz's (1997) reading of Bourdieu's social theory that '*fields are arenas of struggle for legitimation: In Bourdieu's language, for the right to monopolize the exercise of "symbolic violence"*' (p.123). Contestation over legitimation is therefore an unavoidable characteristic of struggles for position in the field. Is my attempt to bring survivor voice *in* to the Wellcome potentially harmful to the SHG? In circumventing around them have I inadvertently reinforced their marginality? In chapter 7, I was looking inwards on the process and asking to what extent the participatory process I instigated was enabling or constraining for the contributors directly involved. This chapter extends the notion of the potential benefit and deficit in my actions outwards by asking who else is affected by my participatory intervention? Is it possible that my actions are in conflict with the work of survivor-led groups? Participatory interventions carry benefit for some and deficit for others, and there are always unintended side affects to well-meaning efforts to bring about change.

I am left with a series of uncomfortable questions. Is it in any way legitimate to claim that the 'voice' in the archive *is* a 'survivor voice'? Does the archive stand in opposition to the work of groups such as the SHG? Does its presence strengthen or weaken *their* position in the archival field? This draws me back round to Suchman's definition of legitimacy provided at the start of this chapter which states that 'legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions' (Suchman, 1995, p.574). In this chapter I have sought to consider the legitimacy of the archive from within a survivor perspective and in comparison to survivor 'voice' and I have sought to surface some of the unresolved tensions that will continue to circulate around

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
the archive, calling its legitimacy into question. In revolving around the four contributors it privileges and it excludes, and it opens itself to questioning. Is it an encroachment on survivor history? Is it legitimate for a non-survivor to instigate a survivor archive? Is it appropriate or desirable to instigate instances of survivor history from within the mainstream? I feel I cannot resolve these questions: the answer to the archive's legitimacy always depends on the position of the interpreter within the field and the socially constructed system of norms through which they come to view the archive. What emerges in this chapter as a sub-text, perhaps speaks not just about survivor perceptions on the legitimacy of the archive but my own working through of *my* question marks over the legitimacy of my actions. I return to the haunting questions that surround me, that continuously envelop my thoughts and actions, always unresolved, always unsettling: Am I doing 'good'? Are my actions 'good enough'?



## Chapter 10: Participation, Activism and Archival Representation in Mental Health: Back in Dialogue with the Wellcome Library

This chapter picks up on threads emerging from Chapters 5 through to 9, and focuses again on the dialogue between this research and its host institution, and the complexity inherent in the relationship. The central tenets of PAR, are bound up in activist-orientated notions that envision participatory research and practice as a vehicle for enabling social transformation (Kindon, 2007; Gaventa, 1993; Mies, 1983). In Chapter 9, I argue that the archive of mental health recovery stories carries greater potential for impact in the archival field than the field of mental health. Picking up on this thread, my initial aim for this chapter was to give this claim some weight by tracing the degrees of influence that the research and participatory process associated with the archive of mental health recovery stories has had on challenging and perhaps even transforming attitudes and practice within the Special Collections team at the Wellcome Library, particularly in relation to their collection and representation of mental health related lived experience. Outside of the formal interviews that I conducted as part of this research, my ongoing observation of the team at work and involvement in internal meetings and public events were indicative of a shift occurring as this research has progressed. Yet attempting to prove a *direct* connection between my interaction and dialogue with the team and these changes proved to be impossibly speculative. This necessarily gave way to an emergent understanding of the ways in which the changes that I was both 'witness to' and 'participant in' were being enabled by broader shifts in the field and habitus in which the Special Collections team operate (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). My narrative therefore seeks to shift the focus away from a consideration of the degree to which I/we/the archive has been influential in bringing about change within the Special Collections team, towards a more nuanced analysis of how the changes that I perceive to be taking place have arisen in response to shifts in the broader context for action (Crossley, 2006). Occurring simultaneously with these dynamic shifts in field and habitus that have affected the Special Collections team, there has been movement in *my* habitus. This movement is as an inevitable outcome of going through the research process. I now see the Wellcome Library from a different, less oppositional, more empathetic perspective, influencing what I choose to bring to bear here. Therefore, what I am arguing here, and what will become clear as the chapter progresses, is that this research has not been the *reason* for change at the Wellcome, but it has been *part* of a change. It is woven into the shifting contexts and shifting discourse surrounding the team in relation to participation, engagement, representation and mental health, and it is these broader shifts that have begun to open up new possibilities for action for them.

Seeking to surface these shifts, is in keeping with Bourdieu's notion of fields as dynamic spaces which:

Cannot be reduced to a simple aggregate of isolated agents or to the sum of elements merely juxtaposed...In other words, the constituting agents may be described as so many forces which, by their existence, opposition or combination, determine the specific structure at any given time. In return, each of these is defined by its particular position within this field from which it derives *positional properties* which cannot be assimilated to intrinsic properties (1971, p.161).

Simultaneously, and happening concurrently with these shifts, embodying this research and living through it has made *me* more aware and empathetic to complexity. As I have troubled the participatory rhetoric and my own enactment of it, I have embraced a blurring of the distinctions that have guided my perceptions of ways and means of enabling 'good' and 'just' praxis, and in this embrace I have witnessed the crumbling of the dichotomies that have shaped my ideology (unraveled in more depth in Chapter 11). This unraveling, this break down, has enabled me to see that I (and the praxis I have embodied) am closer to the Wellcome and its stance than I envisaged at the outset of this research process. It is aspects of this complex picture that I seek to draw attention to here in this chapter.

### **The value of personal narrative in the context of mental health**

I begin with a return to the interviews that form the basis of the analysis given in Chapter 5, in which I draw out general perceptions and attitudes towards participatory approaches held within the Special Collections team at the Wellcome Library. In that set of interviews, I also explored with the team their reactions to the finished archive of mental health recovery stories and its process of construction, and I pick up on that line of questioning and investigation here as a means of looking again at the dialogic relation between myself, this research and its host institution. The interviews were shaped to gain an indication of the extent to which the archive might influence the nature of the Wellcome Library's collecting practices in the area of mental health, and the possibilities of the team developing work along the same, or adapted lines in the future. At the time of the interviews, I was looking to unravel the extent to which the archive might directly impact on the institutional context of the Wellcome Library, leading to a challenge of their approaches in this area.

Beginning with the broad notion of value in relation to personal accounts of various kinds from individuals with lived experience in mental health, the collective perspective emanating across the interviews was that the team place an archival value on such

accounts, tied into their ability to bring 'colour, life, and real understanding from experience' into the archives (Project Cataloguer 1). There was also a perception, held across the team, that their current collections don't adequately reflect the 'patient's side' of the story (Archives Assistant). Across the interviews, there was also consensus that 'patient voice' is poorly documented in their archives and manuscript holdings:

Anna: If a researcher asked you to recommend collections that would give them a taste of lived experience in a mental health context where would you suggest they look?

Senior Archivist 1: Mental health patient accounts is an interesting one. It zeros in on one of the problems with our collections, and our archives as a whole, which is the patient voice is poorly documented. We have some diaries of someone's long struggle with depression. We have the odd patient account of the mental health experience. By and large we are dealing with records that are generated by institutions, by asylums, or by doctors and you really have to scratch about for the patient voice in this area [...]The absent patient voice. We leap on it at accession meetings if something comes up where we think 'ah patient experience', that's really worth considering simply because it plugs that gap. But there is still a medical imbalance in what we have got.

### Recognition of responsibility

There was a collective sense of responsibility across the interviews, that addressing the gap, depicted as the 'absent patient voice' (Senior Archivist 2), was something the team should be proactively seeking to address through their collecting mandate. This is summed up by one interviewee who commented- 'If we say we are an archive that is collecting the history of medicine, which we do, then it [collecting experiential accounts] is a huge part of it, documenting experience is really important' (Project Cataloguer 1). Along with the universally strong affirmation of the value of personal accounts, there was an accompanying recognition that if they were going to push more firmly into collecting more of this type of material, then as a team there may be some underlying attitudinal biases that would need to be surfaced and addressed. Several interviewees indicated that, as a collective, the team is still more likely to question the legitimacy and validity of personal accounts than institutionally or professionally created counter-parts:

Anna: Do you think that for the team, the main barriers to collecting personal archives around mental health are to do with practical difficulties, or attitudinal barriers?

Project Cataloguer 1: I don't know if there is something around the value of those stories compared against institutions and doctors. Perhaps that is something that came out in that meeting, when we were talking about that woman's scrap books

and diaries - does this really have value? In the same way, we wouldn't question it if it was from a GP. So I don't know if there is a bit of an institutional bias there towards the records of doctors and hospitals that we are not quite addressing.

Here I am reminded of Argyris and Schon's notions of the difference between 'espoused theory' and 'theory in use' which I applied to myself in Chapter 7, where we espouse one belief but a reflective analysis of how we work in practice reveals that we may in fact be operating in practice on a different set of assumptions. One interviewee gets close to articulating this in the following discussion:

Anna: Can you think of any concrete examples, where either you or someone else in the team has had to appraise some sort of personal account in a mental health context. Was it difficult to appraise its value?

Senior Archivist 1: [...] I think it is fair to say that within the department there is a bit of a cultural reluctance perhaps even to look at the stuff particularly closely because there is this business of professional, expert, kitemarked information again. If you get something from MIND or MENCAP it carries a seal of institutional approval. If you get something from Joe Bloggs, whose "only" qualification with lots of inverted commas is that they have had mental illness, there is that feeling of 'prove to me that your stuff is valuable you!' We are perhaps as a profession, and maybe within the team, well [pause] superior is not the right word [pause] but Joe Bloggs is in a one down position [pause] and it's up to them to prove to us that their stuff meets our high and exacting standards. I may malign my colleagues there [pause] looking deep within my archival soul that is probably a bit of a subconscious reflex on my own part as well. We are just so used to dealing with organizations so when –an in inverted commas - "civilian" - walks off the street with their stuff with no ready made marker of their expertise in this area we feel a little bit like [pause] this could just be rubbish from some ordinary member of the public, a caricature, there is definitely a risk that we might see things that way.

Buried in the 'seal of institutional approval' that this interviewee attributes to organizations such as MIND and MENCAP is Bourdieu's notion of 'symbolic capital' which is unquestionably carried by institutions, organizations and/or established categories of professionals who have built up a 'heritage of commitments and debts of honour, a capital of rights and duties built up in the course of successive generations' (Bourdieu, 1977, p.178) that serve to legitimate their social standing and their merit. This symbolic capital precedes the perception that their archive material is valuable and sacred, and underscores the assumption that their archives are to be preferred. The weight of this symbolic capital renders the archives of those without such credentials into a marginal position. The value of their material is more readily questionable, more easily discounted as profane. Here, Senior Archivist 2 is acknowledging that the power inherent in the 'symbolic capital' embedded in society's institutions is difficult to circumvent and expose.

## Responsibility in recognition of constraint

In pushing in further with the interviewees on whether it was likely that the team would move towards adopting a more targeted and pro-active approach to collecting personal mental health accounts to add to the existing archive collections, their optimism for wanting to be involved in bringing more of this type of material into the collections was coupled with a pragmatic articulation of the practical constraints of doing so. These practical constraints were tied into a recognition across the team of the relatively high resource related costs associated with processing sensitive personal data:

Anna: Do you perceive any barriers to collecting more personal accounts?

Senior Archivist 1: [...]The nice thing about organizational papers is you have a fair idea of what is going to appear in them, the thing with personal papers is you have documents that could potentially go anywhere in terms of content. You might have material about third parties that open up someone to prosecution unless it was redacted suddenly cropping up on page 85 out of 86 pages of inoffensive stuff. It certainly raises the workload. Its not insuperable [...]but it does make our jobs more labour intensive.

Tied up in issues of data protection there are also difficulties in negotiating closures with depositors which increases the complexity and time involved in processing this type of material:

Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections: There is also something about consent of third parties who might be mentioned or not appear in their best light in some of this material [...]It does mean you have to close the collection for a very, very long time. The individual doesn't always see it like that, to them it is 'their' diary, and so the fact that you can identify maybe the medical professionals who are perhaps still practicing in ways that could damage their medical careers is problematic. These conversations are very difficult to have.

There are also issues surfaced across the interviews relating to the difficulty of appraising the value of such personal material:

Senior Archivist 1: Which would you take? We have this belief, this fetish with representativeness. How do you discern if something is representative? Is it possible for something to be representative of such a unique experience, particularly if it involves mental health? It is representative of a sample of one. So if this state exists in one head - of course it's representative - and it's not comparable to anything else.

The interviewees also highlight difficulties in locating potential depositors and donators as being of major significance:

Much more difficult for the unpublished sources. Difficult to know what is out there and how to get hold of it. I think we have begun to think a lot more about that kind of approach, but it's really quite difficult to find and seek out the people and what they might have. How do you know who has been keeping a diary? There are hundreds of thousands of people who might have been. How do you know what documentary evidence might be there to collect? (Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections).

The difficulty of 'knowing what is out there' (Archivist 2) is also further problematized by the interviewees in relation to the difficulty of approaching people as potential depositors because as one interviewee puts it 'you can't go up to someone and say – I have heard you are a schizophrenic can I have your papers please?' (Archivist 4). The team also have a sense that barriers may well be put up by the depositors and donators themselves:

As part of my project I was trying to get dissenting voices but they are impossible to find. I have the issue of - I might write to them- and I have Wellcome-headed note paper - are they going to respond to me? People who think the Wellcome Trust is the devil are not going to start engaging with their archivist. There is that risk that you then just get the Wellcome Trust approved view of health and medicine. We always try to think about dissenting voices and non-official versions of events. We take in difference of opinions- but the bottom line is not everyone wants their archives to come to us and that is their choice (Archivist 4).

The issues raised by the interviewees are complexities that as a professional archivist I identify with, and I am sympathetic to. I have had to confront them myself and work within their constraints. I therefore do not read these as mythical barriers, but as real and tangible constraints. There are the difficulties bound up in representing an institution that potential depositors that you want to engage with may be wary of, or actively oppose. Sometimes that barrier can be overcome with in-depth relationship building activities, sometimes a clash of politics means that the barrier is insurmountable. Likewise, the legal requirement to comply with the Data Protection Act does make personal material more difficult to process, and there are many occasions when applying closures is necessary. At times, when a depositor wants the material to be open but finds this clashes with the legal requirement to protect third parties, this results in difficult negotiations. Collecting and processing this type of material ready for public access is undoubtedly a lengthy and time-consuming process requiring a significant resource investment. My interpretation, reading across these interviews, is therefore that in surfacing the difficulties of taking a targeted approach to collecting personal experiential accounts connected to mental health, the belief and hope that more could be done, was being tempered by a pragmatic and realistic understanding of the costs involved in undertaking this type of work. There was therefore

an uncertainty over what the team could realistically achieve in pushing this agenda forward. These pragmatic concerns were sitting alongside unresolved intellectual questions around developing a workable strategy for capturing mental health related experience. The team were questioning how they would negotiate gauging the value of personal accounts, and surfaced their confusion over what the appraisal criteria could or should be, and how this sits within the wider question of what a documentation strategy for this type of material might look like— would we try to be representative of common experiences in this area with what we might take in? Are personal narratives ever representative beyond the individual instance? Is validity achieved through documenting a cross section of experience to preserve a spectrum of perspectives? How do we judge the quality of the record? This searching for a workable solution is captured in the following discussion with Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections:

Anna: Do you think there would ever be a move towards taking a more bottom up approach [to documenting mental health experience], so not starting with the elites, the professionals, the institutions, the organizations. Do you think that is at all likely in the near future?

Jenny Haynes: I would like to see more of it. It is very difficult though when you are doing targeted collecting when you haven't got an organization to deal with. It is very intensive of staff resources because you have to try and find a disparate group of people who may not have self organized themselves into something. That is very, very time consuming and I don't know if there is practically the resource that we could put towards that and justify it. And it's such a shame. There is a disparate group I am working with at the moment, because they are not organized into an organization it is really difficult for me, I can't deal with them all individually and facilitate it. They really have to self-organize.

These comments from the Head of Special Collections are not indicative of a closure to the possibility of doing more to counter-balance the bias in the collections towards the professional, institutional, organizational view of mental health. It is not a closure to taking a bottom-up approach, but a realism that the approach has to be do-able within resource constraints. The approach has to balance perceived benefit and cost and this leads to the perception that working with disparate individuals would never be as feasible as working at grass-roots level with self-organized communities. Underlying these pragmatic concerns are the same questions that have haunted the construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories: where and how do we draw the lines between inclusion and exclusion? How do we represent in recognition of limits, when we know we can never be representative enough?

### Troubling relational proximity

This ties in with the general sense across the interviews that when thinking about ways and means of collecting personal material from individuals with lived experience in a mental health context, it was the *specific* participatory approach undertaken within the archive of mental health recovery stories that was proving most problematic for the team. This therefore needs careful disentangling from their attitudes to broader possibilities of expanding their collecting in this area by other means such as proactive attempts to work alongside grass-root 'survivor' collectives or developing a more proactive approach to collecting personal archives from individuals with lived experience through traditional donation processes. These strategies, although still seen as difficult and time consuming, were not necessarily perceived as completely beyond the realms of possibility. From the interviews, the overwhelming impression given to me was that the specific approach to the construction and curation of an archival space, embedded within the archive of mental health recovery stories, is not something that the Special Collections team are likely to be instigating in the foreseeable future as a means of diversifying their mental health related collections, but this should not be interpreted as a complete closure to finding a different way to grow and diversify their collections in this area.

In relation to the specific approach underpinning the archive of mental health recovery stories, the predominant barrier perceived by the team as the central stumbling block was, as suggested by the Head of Special Collections, the resource implications connected to working with individuals on a one-to-one basis. The unanimous response provided by the team was that 'we are already running around [like] headless chickens' (Senior Archivist 2) and therefore the spare capacity to take on such 'demanding' (Senior Archivist 2) work simply isn't there:

Project Cataloguer 1: It's so time consuming to develop these relationships [pause]. So difficult to try and put these things together [pause]. I think it's a valuable approach that should be adopted in some way, you can get so much more out of it that you wouldn't get from traditional approaches [pause], but I don't know how you get past the resource issue.

However, one member of the team responding specifically to the archive of mental health recovery stories, acknowledged directly that there was more to the team's discomfort in the approach than awareness of lack of capacity for undertaking the work. This particular interviewee suggested that there are more subtle barriers at play in relation to the suitability of the relational framework underpinning the archive of mental health recovery



Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
stories. This interviewee indicated that work that requires emotion, personal attachment, and engaged inter-personal negotiation sit uncomfortably within the 'professional' frames of reference in which the team currently operates:

Anna: You are the first person to raise concerns over the emotional involvement involved in creating the archive.

Archivist 1: Has no one else mentioned that? I am astounded! It can only be because they haven't watched the process that carefully. It seems blindingly obvious to me that it is incredibly difficult and draining. Have they not read the archive? I find that really surprising that no one else has raised it.

Anna: Yes it requires a completely different approach. You are right it has been an emotional process.

Archivist 1: [...]Other aspects of archival work you can shoe horn into someone's job description but not this type of thing. You can do too much damage if you do it badly. It could be a complete disaster. I think we are just not able to work in that way- [pause] the personal involvement, the emotional attachment, the constant contact and negotiation, the intense relationship building. It's very alien to our way of working, and we find it difficult enough when we come across emotion within our conventional way of doing things. When we come across a depositor who does need more than we would usually give in terms of personal contact we find it extremely difficult. We are happier working in a more detached way.

This interviewee goes on to suggest that it would be very difficult to take the work of the archive of mental health recovery stories forward in its current incarnation because of the relational demands that lie at its heart:

Anna: If Jenny said to you I want you to expand the mental health recovery archive – how feasible do you think it would be?

Archivist 1: (laughter) Is this a question just for me?

Anna: (laughter) No need to feel paranoid – I am asking everybody!

Archivist 1: I would feel very cautious I have to say. No I would feel very ambivalent about it [pause] I think I would find it very daunting [pause]. The amount of one-on-one interaction that's really what is problematic for me [...]I know there would be different ways of growing it without that one-on-one intensive relationship, so I would have to look at going about it differently I think. I think others within the team would find this equally challenging.

As explored in Chapter 7, there have been points in the construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories where, out of an awareness of the distance between the Wellcome Library as host institution and the contributors, I have sought to enable some sort of relational engagement between the contributors and members of the Special

Collections team by inviting them to attend our collaborative workshops. In fact, a representative attended the first meeting, but subsequently their involvement trailed away. The relational detachment between host and contributors has stubbornly remained throughout the process. Reflecting on this, Peter says 'well we never got to know anyone at the Wellcome did we other than you? When I think of the Wellcome's involvement it was all instrumental rather than relational wasn't it? They provided resource, venues, infrastructure but their heart and soul wasn't present in the project was it?' (Interview, 1 May 2015). A similar point is made by Dolly in our conversation about the Wellcome's role:

Anna: How would you describe the Wellcome's role in the project?

Dolly: They make good cake! [laughter] I like their café [laughter]. A bit in the background. I met a few people, but they were very much just in the background, supporting you at a distance. I didn't really see them or what happens behind closed doors. Not that I necessarily wanted to. Having been involved I am taking more of an interest in what the Wellcome is doing, I think they are moving away from being purely scientific, being more inclusive, and trying to approach human problems in more than just a scientific way. I can see why having the archive is good for that. I just saw them as providers of cake. That was their biggest contribution! [laughter] (Interview, 29 July 2014).

In relation to the loss of neutrality, the depth of engagement, the intense inter-personal relationships, and the step beyond the professional boundary- these central tenets embedded in the archive of mental health recovery stories are fundamentally too radically opposed to the overarching impartial, detached, and neutral stance that is embodied within the Wellcome Library's approach to practice for there to be any likelihood that the team would be able to move explicitly towards adopting a similar stance in their own work (or even aspects of their work) in the foreseeable future. However, what I have found particularly challenging to reflect on is the extent to which I now frame this *impossibility* as a pejorative indictment on practice at the Wellcome Library. At the beginning of the process, I was adopting an oppositional stance to the Wellcome's detached ways of operating and building relationships. My antagonistic reaction was a reflection back on my past, and my own former embodiment of this mode of 'doing archives' a mode of practice that I was (through this PhD) desperate to break away from. Seeing (when I started the PhD) all the negatives, the difficulties, the challenges of working from within that stance. I had a growing sense of unease about my own participation in archival work that was driven primarily by an impartial, neutral, and detached mode of practice, seeing it as a denial of the underlying politics driving archival work, and viewing it as a refusal to engage in shifting the power relations underpinning archival spaces. However, in stepping away

from that mode I realize that operating through deep engagement, in work that is openly ideological in choosing 'a side' carries with it as many ethical tensions and challenges. It in fact carries the same dangers of denial, and the same potential to be ineffectual in challenging prevailing power relationships. In other words, I am no longer searching for that 'innocent' place from which to undertake practice and I have a deeper personal understanding that all positions, stances, and means of working carry potential for benefit and potential for harm in equal measure. As explored in Chapter 5, for collecting institutions like the Wellcome Library, as much as their stance might be framed as introducing constraints and limited political possibilities, in such a framing there needs to be recognition that there is in fact a fundamental *utility* in embodying an impartial, neutral, and detached stance. My understanding has shifted in this process, and I no longer seek to frame the Wellcome's mode of operating simplistically in a purely pejorative way. The *utility*, the *reward*, the *benefits* inherent in their stance is worth unraveling in more depth here, alongside an unraveling of the extent to which archival activism is possible from *within* the detached, neutral, objective stance embodied within the library.

### **Active Archiving, Archival Activism, impartiality and deep engagement**

As explored in Chapter 2, postmodernist archival discourse has placed an emphasis on exploring the relationship between archives, power and politics. In this discourse, the Jenkinsonian figure of the archivist as passive curator has been thoroughly denounced and replaced instead with a vision of the archivist as active shaper of the record (Keetelar, 2008; Cook & Schwartz, 2002; Stoler, 2009; Flinn 2010, Jimerson, 2009). With the shift from passive to active, there has been a re-examination of professional ethics and a move towards centralizing social justice, advocacy and activism as central tenets of the archival role (Duff et al, 2014; Flinn, 2010; Gilliland 2011). Under this lens, the concepts of neutrality, objectivity, impartiality, and detachment as guiding principles for archival work have come under increasing contestation and scrutiny (Gilliland 2011; Harris, 2007 and 2011; Jimerson, 2013; Caswell, 2013; Greene, 2013). From the resulting discourse it is difficult to disentangle the relative positioning of different writers in relation to the utility of these concepts, primarily because the terms are conflated together by different authors in different ways, with no overarching consensus on meaning or application in practice. Greene (2013), who embraces the notion of the archivist as active shaper but speaks from a questioning perspective over the applicability of social justice as the overarching framework for archival work, contends that archivists should abandon objectivity as a guiding principle but should continue to strive towards neutrality. Jimerson (2013),

speaking from within a framework of social justice, argues that archivists should reject neutrality as a guiding principle but should strive towards objectivity. Both uphold the possibility that detachment to achieve fairness should remain as a central tenet of archival conduct. Harris (2005) speaking from within a social justice frame speaks not of objectivity or neutrality but of impartiality, and has been vocal in lifting the veil off the 'impartial position'. Harris (2005) highlights that 'impartiality is a chimera turning record makers into the pawns of those who have power' arguing that 'any attempt to be impartial constitutes a choice, whether conscious or not, to replicate if not to reinforce prevailing relations of power' (p.243-245). Here Harris is using 'impartiality' pejoratively to indicate the danger for those operating under its guise to 'turn their backs on higher callings and condemn themselves to being merely bureaucrats and functionaries' (p.245). In this thesis, in Chapter 8, I articulate the stance I have taken in relation to these concepts in my role as a collaborative researcher in the archive of mental health recovery stories. Following Jimerson (2009), I reject neutrality as a guiding principle in favour of openly choosing a 'side' but I draw on feminist notions of 'strong objectivity' that emanate from standpoint theory to express a commitment to reflexively step back and out from my situated position both as a means of enacting empathetic understanding in relation to the position of others, and as a means of gaining perspective and a view of the wider contextual environment. What my own working thought of these concepts indicates is that embracing social justice, advocacy and activism does not result in a straightforward, wholesale rejection of these concepts but a re-negotiation of them in context. Equally then, it is possible to suggest that the more explicitly traditional embrace of neutrality, impartiality and objectivity as guiding principles at the Wellcome Library, doesn't implicitly carry a straightforward rejection of social justice, advocacy and activism as professional endeavors. These endeavors can be negotiated and enacted to some degree from within a neutral, objective, and impartial stance.

At this point it is worth drawing on the writing of Gilliland (2011) who speaks as an advocate for social justice, but seeks to confront and unravel the 'seemingly competing notions' of 'professional neutrality' on the one hand and 'archival activism' on the other (p.195). Gilliland traces, through the writing of neo-Jenkinsonian writer Duranti, the axiom that has laid at the heart of archival practice that 'professional neutrality is an essential requirement to ensure that archives and archivists resist politicization and be trusted by society to retain its records and make them available without alteration into the future' (p.196). In her exploration, Gilliland surfaces the centrality of the neutrality axiom in most professional archival codes of ethics. She takes forward neutrality as her central concept

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy suggesting that its attributes include 'impartiality, tolerance, non-alignment, and objectivity' (p.196). She suggests that it is to these qualities of neutrality that the International Council on Archives (ICA) Code of Ethics alludes when it opens with the statement that 'the objectivity and impartiality of archivists is the measure of their professionalism. They should resist pressure from any source to manipulate evidence so as to conceal or distort facts' and continues, 'they should offer impartial advice to all, and employ available resources to provide a balanced range of services' (International Council on Archives 1996 in Gilliland, 2011, p.196). Gilliland's work also surfaces how this homage to neutrality is also present in several other national association codes of ethics and conduct (Archives and Records Association UK 2010 ; Society of American Archivists 2005 in Gilliland, 2011, p.196 ). Gilliland surfaces the tension inherent in these codes that simultaneously hold up some of the central tenets of social justice on the one hand, and notions of neutrality on the other. In these codes, the archivist is exhorted to play an active role in the repatriation of displaced archives. As well as an active role in ensuring the privacy of individuals who are the subjects of records especially those who had no voice in the use of the materials. As well as an active role in addressing cultural sensitivities (International Council on Archives 1996; Association of Canadian Archivists 1999 ; Society of American Archivists 2005 ; Archives and Records Association 2010 in Gilliland, 2011, p.196). These activities should be undertaken whilst at the same time upholding neutrality and impartiality as guiding principles. Gilliland contends that 'it is not at all clear how archivists are to achieve these things without being drawn into at least advocacy, if not activism, especially given that the same codes are binding them over to objectivity and impartiality (International Council on Archives, 1996; Society of American Archivists 2005 in Gilliland, 2011, p.196).

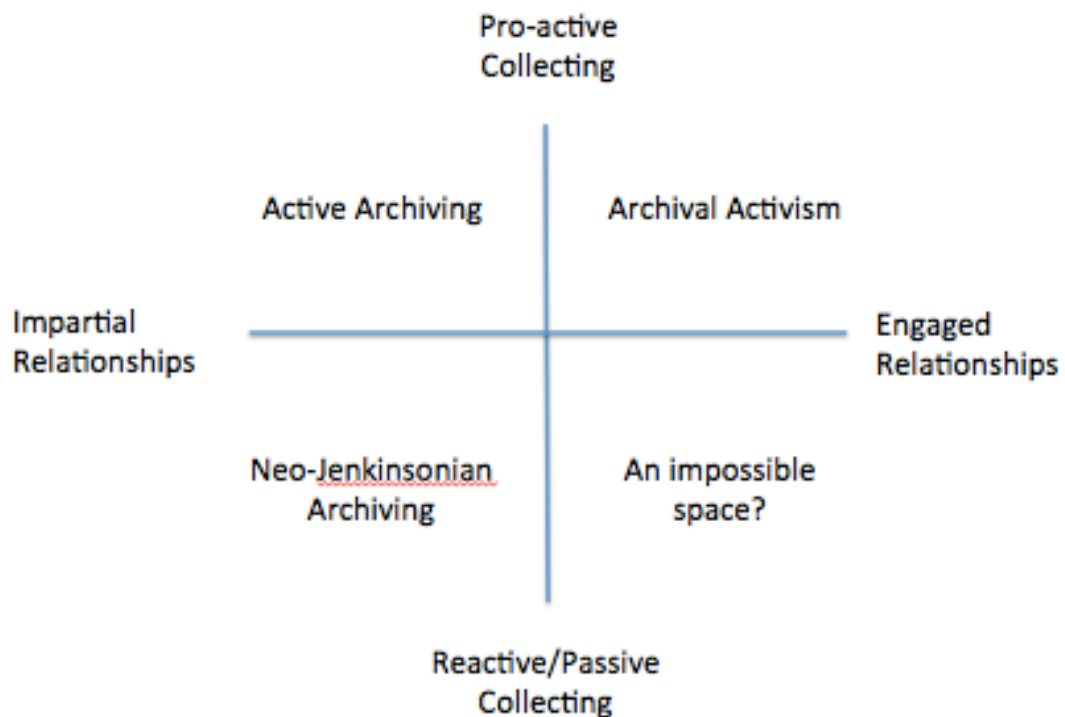
Gilliland's discomfort with neutrality as a guiding principle lies in its close association with objectivity. Objectivity is often used synonymously with neutrality and is also coupled with impartiality. Gilliland's argument against objectivity relates to her reading of the genealogy of the concept that she argues can be traced back to a positivist stance. She draws out how the term derives from a philosophical position built on a belief in factual truth that is discernable and attainable through scientific methods of inquiry, existing independently of subjective human beliefs. When read in the context of formulations of archival theory and practice as a science, Gilliland suggests that archival ethical codes that speak of neutrality and impartiality, in fact resonate with the controversial early twentieth century concept of Wertfreiheit (value-free or ethically neutral) social science. Such value free social science was promoted by sociologist Max Weber and has notions revived in the mid-twentieth century- a formative period for archival professionalism. Proponents of value-free social

science included 'individuals who feared the intrusion of political ideology and reformist zealotry into science and other areas of intellectual endeavor, as well as those who sought to demonstrate that research in the social sciences could meet standards of objectivity set in the sciences and thus achieve recognition and status within the academy' (p.196).

Gilliland's argument chimes with that of Harris, and is essentially that neutrality that is tied into notions of objectivity that fall back on a conceptualization that there is such a thing as value-free or ethically neutral research and practice is nothing more than an illusion. Yet the question over the extent to which the archivist should embrace or reject notions of neutrality, objectivity and impartiality as central guiding principles, and the degree to which these principles clash with an embrace of social justice, advocacy and activism is far from clear. The picture emerging from the archival literature, as surfaced by Gilliland (2011), is one of confusion. Can you uphold social justice by investing in practice that is premised on activism and advocacy whilst *simultaneously* maintaining and upholding a neutral, impartial, objective position, or are these two stances always incompatible? In practice, is this not always less about absolutes (fixed positions in definite locations) and more about subtle interplays between action, concepts and stance? I may have rejected neutrality and impartiality in the construction of the archive in favour of deep engagement, but am I advocating that in order for the Wellcome to enact social justice through their practice that their only choice is to follow suit?

In his recent critique of the social justice agenda in archival contexts, Greene (2013) positions himself as an active archivist committed to embracing 'diversity in order to represent all voices in society—not just the political, economic, social, and intellectual elites'. Whilst seeing himself as an activist, he troubles the tendency with what he perceives to be the social justice agenda to do away with archival neutrality. In his activist position he upholds the importance of maintaining neutrality, suggesting that if archives are 'battle grounds for contesting ideologies then the archival ground needs to be 'neutral ground so that the terrain does not unduly influence the contest of ideologies one way or the other' (p.312). Clearly then, Greene (2013) is articulating the possibility of two different forms of active archiving: one premised on maintaining neutrality, one premised on neutrality's opposite. This led me to seek to map this distinction out to bring clarity to the possibility of reading archival activism in the terms established by Greene. To do this I have narrowed my lens to thinking purely in relation to archive collecting mandates. My first axis relates to the nature of relationships embedded in the collecting using a sliding scale between impartiality and deep engagement. My second axis considers the degree of pro-activity enacted through the collecting. In overlaying these it is possible to suggest that

there is a difference between what I am calling 'active archiving' which is pro-active but impartial, and what I am calling 'archival activism' that is proactive and deeply engaged. This is the difference between the stance I adopted in creating the archive of mental health recovery stories, and the stance inherently embedded at the Wellcome Library. They enact 'active archiving' and I have sought to enact 'archival activism'. In their active archiving they enact impartial relationships to retain a neutral space, in the archive of mental health recovery stories I have enacted deep engagement to make a political statement. This is a distinction implicitly made by Flinn (2011) when he talks of archival activist practice that is explicitly 'associated with a political agenda' aimed at achieving specific 'transformation' as distinct from an activist approach to the archival mission which 'encourages professional archivists and other heritage workers to engage more fully with a range of external activities and all sections of society whilst seeking better to reflect diversity in the archive' (p.1). This isolates a conflation that runs through the literature. The opposite to being active is *not* neutrality, impartiality, or objectivity. When we embrace active archiving we don't necessarily or automatically have to let go of these concepts. The opposite to being active is passivity. Within a social justice framework it is perhaps passivity that is the stance that has to be guarded against.



**Figure 10.1: Mapping Pro-activity and Passivity, Impartiality and Engagement**

At the Wellcome, the ‘impartial’ relational stance adopted by the institution and embodied by the staff is recognized and troubled internally as a guise, and it is also recognized as problematic in its tendency to hide rather than confront the politics effecting collecting decisions. Yet, letting go of it completely is not perceived as a viable option, as doing so would compromise the institution’s ability to effectively fulfill its mandate to represent and draw in a multiplicity of conflicting perspectives and positions across the fields of health and medicine:

We know we are not passive in our decisions to take in collections, we are actively shaping history in our collecting decisions. Archiving is politically charged. Yet if we want to do our job in representing as diversely as we can then we have to avoid what I would call getting embroiled in micro-politics. We cannot possibly align ourselves too closely to the individual, group or organizational perspectives of our depositors [...] So although we know we are not neutral, the concept of neutrality remains useful (Archivist 2).

Maintaining a guise that appears to be one of ‘sitting on the fence’ and ‘operating from above’ is likely to continue to be necessary for collecting institutions like the Wellcome



Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
because it is inherently built into their collecting mandate which demands that they engage with a wide and diverse range of creators, depositors and donators in order to be broadly representative. When your depositors come from potentially oppositional starting points, appearing to 'not pick sides' becomes the only means to establish workable relationships. With the guise of impartiality and neutrality, comes detachment, distance, and professionalism and these qualities may well remain mainstays guiding the Special Collections team's ethos, methodology, approach, and stance into the future. Given the necessity to maintain a guise of 'neutrality' that is inherent in the Wellcome's drive for diverse representation, this makes overtly ideological, explicitly politically charged, and deeply engaged endeavors difficult to envisage as something that could be instigated from within the Wellcome's internal walls. Yet under the guise of impartiality and neutrality and within its constraints, the team *do* uphold a responsibility to counteract marginalizations and privileges in their collecting. My reading of their collective stance is that they are aligned with Harris' vision of the moral imperative to counteract existing power relations in their practice. There is an awareness within the team of the dangers of replicating existing relations of power and the attendant exclusions, privilegings and marginalizations that exist through their enactment of their collecting mandate. This is coupled with a commitment to try to *actively* work against that pull by seeking out new donators and depositors that will act as a counter-balance. Does this mean that I am suggesting that from within the Wellcome's 'active archiving' stance (based on establishing impartial relationships and the guise of a neutral space) it is still possible for the team to be working towards aspects of a social justice mandate? I think what is becoming clearer to me is my tendency to conflate social justices simplistically with archival activism. The relationship between social justice and archival activism is not mutually exclusive. Aspects of social justice as an overarching framework can in fact be enacted from a multiplicity of starting points, and I would suggest that even a neo-Jenkinsonian approach enables elements of a social justice mandate to come to fruition (see Flinn & Duff, forthcoming).

I was confronted with the benefits and rewards that can come from claiming an active but neutral stance through observing the team's interactions with MedAct, which is in itself an active campaign organization focused on addressing global health on issues related to conflict, poverty and the environment. MedAct grew out of the medical peace movement and was formed in 1992 following the merger of two older organisations: the Medical Association for the Prevention of War (MAPW) and the Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons (MCANW). Between 2000 and 2014, MedAct deposited the bulk of its archive collections with the Wellcome Library, and in July 2014 the archive was launched as a

processed and accessible collection through a conference entitled 'Beds Not Bombs'. This was a joint partnership event between the Wellcome Library, MedAct and the University of Bradford, Special Collections (Sims, 2014). The establishment of a relationship between MedAct and the Wellcome along with the deposit of the archive and the resulting partnership working on the conference may at first seem unremarkable, yet its remarkability is grounded in the fact that MedAct actively campaigns in a sustained and ongoing fashion *against* the Wellcome Trust in relation to the Trust's investments in fossil fuel. A recent *Guardian* article by Howard (13 May 2015) outlines the polarized positions of MedAct and the Wellcome Trust in the following terms:

The Wellcome Trust which has an endowment of more than £18bn, is one of the world's largest funders of medical research. In 2014, a minimum of £450m was invested in fossil fuel companies including Shell, Rio Tinto, BHP Billiton and BP. The trust has so far rejected the call to divest. Its director, Jeremy Farrar, has argued that engagement with fossil fuel companies is more effective than divestment. "We use our access to company boards to press for more transparent and sustainable policies that support transition towards a low-carbon economy"...In February a coalition of medical organizations published a report urging the health sector to divest from fossil fuels. It cited climate change as "the biggest global health threat of the 21st century" and asked health organizations including the Wellcome Trust to repeat the leadership they had shown on tobacco divestment. In June 2014, the British Medical Association – the representative body of doctors in the UK – voted in favour of divestment....David McCoy, director of MedAct, one of the organizations that made up the coalition said: "This decision will hopefully encourage the Wellcome Trust and the Gates Foundation to follow suit. Both Wellcome and Gates have been finding excuses to avoid taking the kind of radical action needed to avert the crisis of climate change, whilst the moral, financial and scientific case for divestment by health institutions is becoming harder and harder to dismiss."

This clash of political positions between MedAct and the Library's parent organization, the Wellcome Trust, was in fact surmounted in and through the Wellcome Library's ability to claim a neutral, disinterested, impartial stance even from the politics of their own parent organization. Claiming that the archive was a neutral space *enabled* a relationship with Medact to develop and thrive. The archivists involved in processing the collection and partnering on the conference, were in reality operating on the very *edge* of neutrality and the proceedings of the conference can easily be read as a form of advocacy, bordering on activism for Medact's work. What I find challenging in this instance is that it was the Library's claim to neutrality that was essential in negotiating around the political sensitivities. In this instance neutrality, advocacy and even to a degree activism made surprisingly comfortable bed-fellows. This brings home to me a deeper personal understanding that adopting a neutral, objective and impartial stance is not the polar

opposite of embracing social justice. These stances are *not* necessarily mutually exclusive polarities. The library staff have compelling and good reasons for not wanting to entirely shake off the guise of neutrality that they operate under, and I think I have come to a point of reconciliation, that I am not in fact oppositional to their perspective. I can recognize its benefits and rewards along with its constraints. My/our archive hasn't provoked the library into considering a shift in stance from neutral to deeply engaged, or from what I have outlined in this chapter as a shift from 'active archiving' to 'archival activism' but what I am suggesting here is that I have a deeper appreciation of why such a shift isn't deemed desirable, appropriate or legitimate in their particular context. This is a moment in which rather than speaking *in* to the library's practice and instigating a shift in *their* perspective and practice, they have in fact spoken to *me*. Enabling me to clarify more concretely out of the haze of discourse and action associated with this research, a fundamental disjoin, and tension that rattles beneath the ethical imperatives underscoring my/our attempt at social justice in the construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories. I can recognize that this is part of a broader disjoin running through postmodern archival understandings of the archivist's role in enacting social justice, summed up by Hardiman (2009) who provocatively asks how postmodernists resolve the tension "between a logic which does indeed permit- at times almost demand- equal validity for all perspectives and viewpoints, and the refusal in practice by most postmodernist thinkers to embrace this logic, most notably in their harking to the 'call of and for justice' which is inherently bound up in a privileging logic' (p.36).

### Residual complexity

In my recognition of the potential gains inherent in the Wellcome's stance and approach to collecting, there is of course still an accompanying recognition of the constraints inherent in their perspective and a troubling of the limits of their approach. As surfaced in Chapter 5, a fundamental barrier to enacting genuinely diverse representation in and through their archive comes from the historically founded vision of the academic researcher as primary audience. This vision is challenged at the periphery by notions of the 'curious public'. Yet still, at the time of the interviews, the academic researcher appears as dominant and influential in relation to establishing whom the Wellcome Library believes it is operating for, and whom it sees itself accountable to. Therefore, the vision of the academic researcher is still an influential figure that dictates the ways in which the library shapes, and then frames its collections. This is brought out in discussion with Jenny Haynes around the extent to

which, if it could be achieved in a way that was perhaps less deeply engaged and more in line with their neutral stance, the Wellcome Library would be interested in undertaking creative work around personal narrative in mental health in line with what has been achieved in the archive of mental health recovery stories. Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections suggests that:

It would be enormously difficult to justify for adding to the central head count to the library for a programmatic approach to this [...] So it will take 18 months full time to catalogue the MIND archive, but that is a massive collection which although it's not personal narrative, is really crucial in documenting mental health services and their users across a period of 70 years, compared to a few personal narratives that have taken a year to create. And again what is going to happen is the library will knee-jerk and ask well what is the research potential here? And they will think 'well I can imagine 25 PhD theses coming out of the MIND archive, and for the recovery archive, well Anna's has come out of it so far. I am playing devil's advocate but that would be the value put on it by the library – going back to wanting to traditionally serve their perceived research community...you would have to battle very hard to change that very ingrained way of looking at the world.

In this discussion, we went on to agree that surfacing that 'ingrained view' was perhaps one way of beginning to challenge it:

Anna: I think just highlighting it as 'this is the ingrained view' has its uses. I might not be able to change it through this research but having it concretely said that this is what underscores these decisions on what is collected and who it is collected for, that in itself has a value.

Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections: I think you are right and I think that is where your research could be very useful in making the library take a long hard look at itself. No I am serious I think we need to.

I am aware of the complexity, and layered responses, represented in the interview data in relation to the extent to which the Special Collections team were (at the time of the interviews) in a position, both practically and attitudinally, to begin to take forward an agenda that might not look and feel like the archive of mental health recovery stories, but would begin to proactively diversify their collections around mental health to either bring in, or in some way support, the production of 'survivor' voice and perspectives. There was a sense of 'yes we would like to, but...' sitting around our discussions. As if a move forward was desired but not perceived as possible due to resource constraints. There was a sense across the interviews, that these resource constraints were being compounded by a library context that circumvented the likelihood of being able to 'make a case for' and 'justify' extra resource for such work higher up the chain. Yet, there were further

complexities embedded in the discussions than are surfaced by this recognition alone. Whilst the interviews provide an overarching narrative that suggests that the team see the value inherent in what they term 'patient voices', and whilst the interviews provide a sense of a collective perception of an ethical obligation to seek diversification in their collections to address the institutional/professional bias. At the same time, there were moments in the interviews when a troubling attitudinal tone would surface to cut across and contradict any simplistic reading of where the team sits on these issues. One such moment came from discussing barriers to collecting personal archives from individuals with mental health lived experience with one particular member of the team:

Anna: We have already touched on this but could you say more about the difficulties of collecting these materials. What do you see as the obstacles?

Archivist 1: Some of our experiences is that depositors of that sort of material can be difficult to deal with. They require an awful lot of intervention – that just takes time. There is that slight feeling that if people are cautious, or you might have the same conversation on the phone, or a long conversation for an hour where you get nowhere [pause] I think there is a perception that you are likely to have that with someone who is bipolar or suffering from a particular condition. Whether that is fair I don't know but it's one perception. We are all pushed for time. We are a bit put off by the thought of an extensive difficult negotiation with someone.

This is an uncomfortable sub-text that I cannot avoid confronting, but I will try to do so with respect to the interviewee who trusted me by giving me their frank and honest reaction within the interview. Having been immersed in the construction of the archive with Dolly, Stuart, Andrew and Peter, I was deeply troubled by the articulation that individuals with experience of mental distress are inherently more likely to be difficult to deal with as depositors or donators. This stigmatizing attitude effectively reduces the individual who is expert by experience in mental health 'from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one' (Goffman, 1963, p.3). In trying to work through my own reaction to this, I have challenged myself to confront the degree to which, prior to my involvement in creating the archive, I too held a similar ingrained perspective- a subtle but pervasive believe that if you struggle with mental health then this struggle inevitably spills negatively into interactions and relationships. It is a perception that I have directed at myself. In my own experience of post-natal depression, I carried a deeply ingrained perception of my own malfunction and the catastrophic effect that it had on my ability to relate. I saw and discounted *myself* as difficult to be around at that time. I recognize that stigmatizing attitudes (including those I have held over myself) aren't isolated, static beliefs which are autonomously held and imposed, but are better understood as attributes that arise from

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
social processes through an interplay of culture and power (Holland, 2012). The beliefs voiced by this archivist speak into the wider issue of how our individual disposition (our habitus) is shaped by dominant ideologies that circulate across our domains of association (fields) and the difficulty of being conscious without challenge of a need to break away from the normative cultural assumptions that shape how we see ourselves, others and the world. Holland (2012) suggests that treating stigma merely as a problem that resides in a failure of knowledge and acceptance on the part of the individual or community fails to engage with the more pressing need to address the root cause by deconstructing psychopathology's pervasively dominant discourse (p.219).

What was clear across the interviews was the extent to which the team shares the same discourse for framing, naming and labeling people and things within the mental health field. Even having looked at the archive and having gained a sense of its positioning, and the variety of perspectives and ways of framing experience brought out by Dolly, Stuart, Andrew and Peter, the team spoke over the archive unanimously using the discourse of 'patient' and 'mental illness'. Often choosing to constitute its contents using diagnostic categorizations. On occasion, interviewees were using diagnostic categorizations when talking about a specific contributor's narrative, even when that categorization is overtly and explicitly rejected within the narrative that they were referring to. For example, one interviewee spoke of 'the light Peter sheds on the schizophrenic condition...'. The interviewee's intention was a compliment to the depth of expression in Peter's narrative, yet the result is a mis-appropriation of Peter's story under a category he vehemently argues against. Reading the interviews as a collective body of responses, it is overwhelmingly clear that the medical model is the dominant discourse embodied within the team, through and in which mental health experience is framed. Given that this is the case, it perhaps becomes less surprising to find one interviewee going as far as to articulate that 'bi-polar' people are more likely to be difficult because conferring a 'less than' and 'inferior' status to the individual carrying the label is the end result, or the outworking of a bio-genetic framing of mental health as evidenced through the experiential knowledge of those on the receiving end of these labels (Russo, 2009, Beresford 2000, 2002). For me, this surfaces one of the major tensions in reconciling what I have been doing in constructing the archive with the institutional culture embedded at the Wellcome. There is a gap, a gulf and a void between the archive and where it is situated in the field of health and medicine, and the situated positioning of the Wellcome Library. The archive speaks from a position that seeks to challenge the dominant medical model of pathology, and diagnosis, whereas the Wellcome Library is predominantly aligned with this model.

The staff embody this stance in their choice of frames and discourse. In speaking of 'patients' and 'mental illness' first and foremost, they are subsuming personal and collective experiences under this dominant frame. The dominance of the frame is carried into the processing of collections, where the use of Medical Subject Headings (MESH) as indexing entry points, and the organization of medically orientated subject guides into the collections cements the Wellcome's overarching standpoint. Despite being interested in collecting alternative views, counter-cultures, subversive positions to the dominant position, the centralization of a medical narrative and frame means that these counter-cultures become subjugated on entry; defined by what they are counter-to; immersed under the dominant frame and its accompanying discourse. For me this subjugation is encapsulated in a profound and real way by that statement made by that one interviewee over Peter's narrative 'the light Peter sheds on the schizophrenic condition...'. Everything Peter says *against* and in *opposition* to the use of that label is subsumed under the very frame it seeks to reject. For me, this is symbolic of the danger inherent in aligning an oppositional archive under an institutional framework that upholds the norms it seeks to speak against.

Confronting these sorts of difficult and complex questions with the interviewees as part of the interviewing process became a pivotal point of dialogue in some of the interviews. We were pushing in towards a joint expression of the importance of reflecting on the ingrained, normative assumptions that the team operates under. This process of challenge, through joint exploration and debate, is encapsulated in the following exchange:

Anna: I am really interested in labels so I am asking everyone about how you assign keywords. I think I know the procedure – do you ever think about the implications of the process here – of assigning MESH terms to a collection – do you have any comments around that?

Project Cataloguer 1: Well I suppose when you are dealing with something like mental health it can be really difficult because you are giving someone a very fixed term, a fixed definition [pause] they may have a more fluid understanding of their own experiences and it does just put them in a box and say this is what is wrong with you. Whereas human experience isn't like that, it is a lot more complicated and complex. It needs a bit more than just a few key terms to define it [pause] so that can be difficult in that area [pause] particularly with terms that are now not seen as being acceptable but were perhaps acceptable in terms of the archive, at the time the material was created, terms that we now wouldn't see as acceptable language. Perhaps that is something we have to be aware of when we are cataloguing, just to make sure we are framing it in the right way so that it is not offensive or doesn't come across in the wrong way [pause] so people are aware that these are the documents, and our descriptions are us taking the documents as they are and not trying to place any interpretation on them after the fact.

Anna: Certainly indexing and describing documents from the past, being true to the language used at the time whilst being aware of the impact using that historic terminology has on the present is extremely difficult. My interest relates to the people I have worked with in constructing the archive, where even a term like schizophrenia, which you might think might be perfectly applicable to a particular person, [in fact] for that person is extremely contentious because they don't align themselves to a medical model at all. They might self-identify as a voice hearer perhaps but they would never describe themselves as a schizophrenic, so in that context using a schizophrenic label would be forcing an undesirable frame onto that person's narrative.

Archivist: And then that becomes very difficult with the way we use labels. We wouldn't want to put in voice hearer we would want to put in schizophrenic because it fits those defined terms that we use for research purposes.

Anna: Yes so the fact that the whole model for processing and describing is biased towards a biomedical interpretation makes it very difficult when you are dealing with narratives that hold an alternative perspective. There is in fact a big movement of people who do not frame their struggle with mental health as an illness.

Archivist: It throws up things like that which are ingrained into our way of thinking [pause] as much as we think we are open to collecting alternative viewpoints there are actually all these barriers that stand in the way when it comes to how we process collections and deal with people and their papers. I wouldn't have even thought about the implications of the search terms that we use to be honest. I wasn't aware that we favour particular viewpoints when applying them.

Anna: I probably wouldn't have given it much thought either before I started this research. Unless you have opportunities to listen to people and understand things from their perspective – you can't move away from your own ingrained assumptions. So in that meeting we were recently in about the Audrey Amiss Collection—saying well we need to get the patient voice into our collections, even that label, the 'patient' voice that immediately places someone within a certain worldview around mental health – that in itself is exclusive to those that define their experience in those terms.

Archivist: So the fact that you have us all sitting round a table as professionals saying we need the patient voice in the archive, yes, I can see actually that 'patient' implies 'ill' and it also implies 'receiving treatment', so yes, it carries a constraining assumption [pause] Before I saw it as positive, the fact we want more of the 'patient voice'. I think it is still positive, but it needs more thought [pause] what else are we excluding by talking only about patients?

Anna: Yes, I have become aware of this because I am working in this area, it is the same for me as it is for you, you can't move away from your ingrained assumptions until they are challenged.

Archivist: But now they have been challenged in and through your work, so now we do have a responsibility to think all of this through more carefully.



This exchange unearths the Wellcome Library's situated position, and the embodied dominant discourse that comes with its territory. It also demonstrates that the Special Collections team is a dynamic, vibrant, and responsive collective who are willing to reflect inwards and outwards to challenge the underlying worldviews that shape their practice. It also speaks of the value that I place in being involved in the creation of the archive of mental health recovery stories, that by becoming immersed in the lives of Dolly, Andrew, Peter and Stuart, I have been made more conscious of my own ingrained assumptions around mental health. Without that engagement with different perspectives, it is difficult to move forward and be aware of the normative frames that shape our understandings and the ways in which we are ourselves complicit in constructing and reinforcing those frames. Of course, there is a danger here of constructing an overly simplistic narrative that the Special Collections team were at the time of the interviews collectively unaware of the dominant medical model they operate under, and that having been 'enlightened', they would be able to easily transition, where appropriate, away from this frame. This would be an inaccurate portrayal both in relation to the team's awareness of the models they operate within, and in relation to the complexities inherent in any efforts to renegotiate or transition away from these models in practice. Both the awareness of the issue and the complexity of finding a means to do things differently, is encapsulated in the following discussion around metadata with a senior member of staff:

Anna: I am interested in labels and the way things are labeled within catalogues and so I was asking people to describe to me how they go about assigning key terms to collections. I feel I know the process – I am interested in the intellectual arguments sitting behind it.

Senior Archivist 1: The first defining thing about key terms is that we are bound by an agreement to use whatever indexing terms are used in the main library database – the idea is that interaction with the dataset should be as seamless as possible for readers who are already used to the library set up. That was the deal when we first acquired the CALM software and it's sensible, we don't want to create silos. [However], it means we are saddled with MESH as a way of subject indexing. One of the things that MESH does is it enables you to bring together things of the same topic – so they are different in time, levels or language so we can bring together everything on tuberculosis whether it's TB, consumption, tuberculous in German or whatever – however it does that by referring to terms in a controlled vocabulary that is not lay-person friendly. So a subject search on cancer goes clang and you have to put in neoplasms – this bothers me. It bothers me quite a lot [...] There are all sorts of things that we need to look at as a profession around controlled vocabularies: how do we marry the convenience and bringing together that controlled vocabs offer us, with the advantages of natural language [...] I think 10 years ago I was feeling pretty good about getting our catalogues into database form and making them searchable, but since we completed the retro conversion of the catalogues I have spent the ensuing years becoming more and more aware of how it is not good enough and how we specifically here at the library

and the profession as a whole need to do an awful lot more to ensure that the metadata is transparent and you find your stuff – controlled vocabs are a way in which we know we privilege the academic researcher because they are the ones that will know the particular keywords that will unlock a search – that is one of the problems we are very aware of.

Anna: Are the problems just about the limitations of controlled vocabulary though, or is it also about the frame in which the indexer is viewing the material. I am thinking about Peter's story in the archive, if that was indexed in your catalogue, would the archivist simply see 'schizophrenic' and therefore index it as such without problematizing that?

Senior Archivist 1: In a lot of cases we are seeing things from outside and we are positively encouraged to see things from the outside. We are these detached Godlike figures – we will say this paper is about schizophrenia rather than this paper is about whatever the person who was immersed in the experience says it was about. We have had this belief that we can stand outside and be Godlike whilst all the while actually what this does is privilege one particular top-down vocabulary in which we describe things according to a particular set of values. It's I suppose the effect of the audience to whom we think we are working – up to this point we have been working for, on the one hand historians of medicine who are not necessarily immersed in the experience, and we are also talking about medical professionals as a group – and therefore the patient is labeled from outside – for that audience we have used the vocabulary that comes from being an outsider looking in and looking down. We have not used other vocabularies, still less have we got systems whereby we could open it up to say well you in the voice hearing community how do you describe your experience if you want to make your records accessible? How would you tag them? That is stuff that we don't do [pause] but also if you don't control the vocabulary then you get the scenario where it makes sense to the uploader but it is not a vocab that is shared by anyone else, and you run into the problem of not being able to bring stuff together. I don't think we can avoid a degree of authorial control by saying that this particular term maps to this term employed by a medical practitioner. We *are* making a value judgment by doing that – probably we can't avoid it from a practical point of view – the best thing that we can do is to be aware that we are making a value judgment and monitor our practice and be aware of when we are endorsing one particular viewpoint rather than another. It gets us back to the idea that the archivist is never completely neutral – we need to keep on trying, keep on failing. Beckett – try again, fail again, fail better. That is what we have to keep on doing.

It is useful to think of controlled vocabularies such as MESH as a 'symbolic system' that serve three interrelated but distinct functions: cognition, communication and social differentiation (Bourdieu, 1977, p.4-68). As drawn out by Swartz (1997), Bourdieu sees symbolic systems as 'structuring structures' that enable us to understand and order the world that help us to exercise a cognitive function, but they are also 'structured structures' with an internal logic related to codes 'that are deep structural meanings shared by all members of a culture'. (p.83). Conceptual, symbolic systems such as MESH, simultaneously function as instruments of communication and as instruments of

knowledge (Bourdieu, 1971, p.295 in Swartz, 1997, p.83). As instruments of both knowledge and communication, symbolic systems such as MESH also operate as instruments of domination. And, as surfaced by Swartz (1997), 'dominant symbolic systems provide integration for dominant groups, distinctions and hierarchies for ranking groups, and legitimation of social ranking by encouraging both dominated and dominating to accept the existing hierarchies of social distinction' (Bourdieu 1997, p.114-115 in Swartz, p.83). Therefore, symbolic systems such as MESH also fulfill a political function. In the interview extract given above, the politics bound up in the use of MESH as a controlled vocabulary is being recognized, acknowledged and troubled by Senior Archivist 1 as a complex issue facing the archivist.

What I draw out from this discussion on the complexity of challenging the dominant medical model at the level of cataloguing and indexing is precisely that there is no straightforward course of action available for disrupting the dominance of the symbolic structures used within the Wellcome Library. There are significant constraints imposed by the infrastructures sitting around the cataloguing system, that both locks the team into the use of Medical Subject Headings (MESH) index terms and enforces a singular top-down hierarchical description of the material, which is difficult to break away from. An analysis of 'material-semiotic' relations through the use of actor network theory would undoubtedly shed further insight into the ways in which the technical system is in and of itself an 'actor' that constrains the boundaries of possibility (Latour, 2005). I choose instead to draw out here the fact that Senior Archivist 1 clearly recognizes and is uncomfortable with the privileging and control inherent in the application of a 'top-down' medically orientated vocabulary, but finding a means to break away from this is far more complex than the recognition of the problem. The interviewee conveys a sense of inevitability and entrapment that if the archivist is the one who facilitates the mapping together of related material to make it findable, then he/she will necessarily impose value judgments that shape how the material is categorized, and in so doing will inscribe a worldview over the material that suits the needs of the primary audience carrying with it a privileging effect, re-inscribing the dominant discourse. This can be read as a microcosm of the tension running through this thesis that is at the heart of mainstream archival work, that when we (as professional archivists) are part of the archival process, we become active shapers of the record, weaving our own situatedness and that of our institution and our primary audiences into the representation of the record. We can push back against this tension, reflect on it, shift its focus, and redress the degrees of control and constraint by enabling others into the process (by working 'with' and not 'on' the subjects in the records, and by finding ways of

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
introducing a multiplicity of perspectives) but even in the most participatory of processes we are always having to negotiate the effects of situation and position which inevitably shape the action and define the possibilities.

### **Shifting perspectives, shifting habitus: confronting the ethical complexity in archival choices**

Disentangling the team's willingness to push back against the privilege, constraint and control bound up in their role as active shapers of the record is delving into complexity. What was articulated strongly at times in the interviews as a hard and rigid position that 'we don't invite' others into our internal processes (coupled with the general sense given across the interviews that the team was relatively content with their level of control over the representation of the record) needs to be balanced with some of my observations of the team at work. A pertinent example that I will draw in here is the team's handling of the Audrey Amiss Archive which was occurring concurrently with the interviews I was conducting, which was indicative of an in-depth collective confrontation of the difficult questions that sit around archival representation in a mental health context, and their particular institutional control of that representation.

The Audrey Amiss collection was offered to the Wellcome Library by Audrey's nephew in 2014. It was accepted as a donation and accessioned in three batches between April 2014 and February 2015. The library's interim catalogue description created by the Special Collections team describes Audrey's life in the following terms:

Audrey Amiss was born in 1933 and died in July 2013 just short of 80 years old. She grew up in Sunderland, was spotted as a talented artist as a child and won a scholarship to the Royal Academy School of Art in London. At the age of eighteen Audrey experienced her first episode of mental health problems. It followed soon after the death of her father, to whom she was very close, and this may have been a contributing factor in triggering her illness. She was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic. Throughout her life, she was in and out of mental institutions, many in south London (Bethlem Royal Hospital, Tooting Bec Asylum, The Maudsley Hospital), though in more level periods of her life she worked as a typist in a civil service typing pool. She went on numerous trips abroad including visits to China and Mexico. When visiting China in the 1980s she was arrested, restrained and returned to England to be delivered directly to Tooting Bec Mental Hospital in South West London which resulted in another sectioning. She lived in Clapham, South West London, with her mother until the latter's death and from then on lived a semi-reclusive lifestyle in the flat (Wellcome Library, 2015)

The archival material is also described as part of the interim catalogue entry:

The material in the first accession (Acc.2074) chiefly comprises a series of scrapbooks compiled by Audrey in 1980s up to 2013 which contain food packaging from what Audrey bought and consumed, which has been pasted-in and annotated with her comments and views on the food itself as well as the packaging design, or notes about where it was bought; a series of photograph albums recording her travels as well as local scenes and pictures in and around her home, notably of flowers and objects; a series of volumes and exercise books with details of the letters she wrote and responses. There is also some material relating to Audrey's family (personal ephemera such as Audrey's typing certificates and her mother and father's National Registration Identity Cards).

The second accession (Acc.2101) comprises a large volume of art work by Audrey Amiss. Included is some of Audrey's early work from the late 1940s and the 1950s however it mainly comprises sketches, drawings and paintings created from the mid-1970s up to 2013. The subject matter is wide ranging but is chiefly life drawing from life drawing classes, local scenes in south west London, scenes in central London, animals (mainly at London Zoo), flowers, and still life (not composed). Works are in 'lead' pencil, coloured pencil, wax pastel and water colour paint, with occasional felt tip pen and ball point pen. The large proportion are sketch books of various sizes, including a few pocket sketch books, plus framed works, loose paintings on paper and some paintings on small canvas boards. One box contains personal documents, including letters from Audrey to her sister (and her sister's husband in some cases); letters to and regarding Audrey from other relatives and from health authorities (notably about her Mental Health Tribunal in 1989) and medical professionals; Audrey's account of her trip to China and Hong Kong in the 1980s when she was arrested in China and flown back to the UK and sectioned under the Mental Health Act; personal ephemera of Audrey such as address books, passport, notebooks, clerical training notes, list of works exhibited, death certificate of Isabel Amiss 1989.

A small accession (Acc.2154) was acquired in February 2015 comprising: one file of letters mainly from Audrey to her sister Dorothy, or to Dorothy and her husband John or just to John, recording things in her life, 2001-2007 and 2012-2013; additional personal ephemera of Audrey including photographs from the early 1950s, school books containing her illustrations and educational and employment documents, c.1940-1963.

Thirty-six painting by Audrey Amiss were donated to the collection in June 2015. These works in oil and water colour were produced by Audrey from around the late 1940s to possibly the 1960s. Many were created when she was a student at the Royal Academy School of Art in London. Includes still life, landscapes, local scenes, portraits, figures (Wellcome Library, 2015).

The decision to take in the collection was made at one of the team's regular accessioning meetings, which I was able to sit in on and observe. Prior to the meeting, two members of the Special Collections team had been out to meet Audrey Amiss' nephew and had surveyed the material. Their survey report had been circulated to the team, and the aim at the meeting I attended was for the team to reach a consensus on whether to accept the

collection. In my interviews, Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections described to me the team process of decision-making around collecting new material:

So the process here is to ensure that we as individual team members are not trying to go out and collect for our personal predilections. So we have regular team meetings where everybody has their say about what we collect. So one person or two people will be tasked with researching the collection – whether that is going on a survey visit or looking at something coming up for auction. They think about it first and set out what they think, and then they are interrogated by the rest of us as to why we should give this house room. You are not just thinking in intellectual terms, you do have to play collecting off in relation to the resource implications. So yes, this might be great stuff but will it cost us too much to de-infest the stuff? That sort of pragmatism has to come into play. There is also the acknowledgement of a wider archive environment, so we might think it is a fantastic collection but we don't want to feed the neighbour's cat, so by that I am thinking of instances when the donating body should perhaps be investing in looking after their own archive, or that there is a better more appropriate repository for the material in question. So all that comes into play, but in terms of what intellectual factors are taken into account in our discussion, that is very interesting when you start to unpick it [pause] the indefinable notion of archival value within a particular context [pause] it is something to do with having a compass for your collection - where it has come from- a sense of how the collection has grown and therefore the direction you should be following – there is something to do with the history of that and not varying too widely from that inherent compass. There is something to do with current and future audiences, but there is also something to do with documenting things that are important for society now because if the issue is important now, then there is a chance that in the future it will be of interest. It's difficult to explain, it is not a straightforward process, it is trying to weigh up multiple factors and reach a consensus.

Elements of these multiple factors were laid bare at the meeting. There was a question mark expressed by some over whether the scrapbooks containing food wrappers were really of archival value. Were they too ephemeral? What researcher would want to use them? This was countered with discussion over their value for the history of food consumption, and a belief that such visual material could easily find a place in a Wellcome Collection exhibition. Several team members strongly argued for the value of the collection as a means to bring 'patient voice' into the archive, advocating that the value of the collection was as a first hand window into a schizophrenic mind. A pivotal shift in the discussion came when the Head of Special Collections began to trouble that notion by introducing more complex underlying ethical concerns into the dialogue. This included raising the issue that as Audrey is no longer alive to give us her opinion, there is a need to think seriously about the ethical implications of placing her archive into the context of a library of health and medicine in relation to the potential this carries to subsume her artwork beneath a narrative that foregrounds her as mentally ill. In the subsequent

interviews that I did with the team, several of the interviewees suggested that Jenny's raising of these ethical concerns had a fundamental effect on raising their consciousness of the potential consequences of their collecting:

Archives Assistant: I found the meeting you sat in last week really interesting. I was really stimulated by the whole meeting. Thinking about the sketch books – until Jenny brought up the ethical issues – the institutionalizing of it – I hadn't considered that [pause] I began to feel more uncomfortable with it – the idea that by taking in that collection we are institutionalizing *her* – I still don't really know where I sit about it to be honest. Should we take it? We want to represent patient views [pause] the agreement was we should pursue it further and consider how we would make it accessible to researchers. How we describe her then becomes an ethical question– that was really interestingly actually.

Similarly in the following exchange:

Anna: Can you give an example of where there has been a lot of discussion around a particular acquisition?

Project Cataloguer 1: I think the most clear example is the recent meeting that you also attended. I can't remember the name of the woman whose papers it was.

Anna: Aunt Audrey, yes I have forgotten her surname, Amiss is it?

Project Cataloguer 1: Yes, her papers about her experience of mental health, the paintings that she had done and drawings and scrap books of her day to day life; and the discussion we had around that was really interesting because there was some quite different views on it. So we had on the one hand 'it's an important collection and it gives us a really valuable insight into someone's routine' – those daily mannerisms that you might think are mundane but when put together build up a really important picture of someone living with mental illness day to day; on the other hand you have some other archivists who are saying 'the volume of the material is it actually that interesting? – who would be doing research – what value would that actually have in the future?' And then what I thought took us to a different level of discussion was when we began to think in more depth about the ethical issues involved in us taking in the material. Jenny raised a series of dilemmas that I hadn't thought about and wouldn't have occurred to me I don't think. The idea that perhaps we are stigmatizing this woman by putting her into a medical archive and saying that she suffers from mental illness when she might prefer to be remembered for her art work, and are we taking away that ability for her to be remembered purely based on her artistic merit? –We started looking at this collection in quite simplistic terms, but then in opening out the wider ethical consequences of our decision to take this material in, suddenly we are being much more reflective about it. I think the upshot of that is, yes we have collectively agreed to take it in, but we have now more of a shared understanding that we don't want to do it in a blinkered way, we want to find a way of working with the ethical tension that us taking it in creates, somehow find a way of reflecting on that tension in our care, processing and use of the material [...] Having opened up those ethical questions, it now seems to me that acknowledging the dilemma somehow as we

are processing and opening the collection up for access, is the only ethical way for us to proceed.

In the surfacing of these complexities at the accessioning meeting and in the team's reflections on that meeting, I sensed a tangible shift away from a simplistic mantra that 'we have a duty to collect patient voice to balance our collections' towards a deeper reflective engagement with the ethics of archival representation. It was the raising of these ethical tensions, the forcing of them out into the open by the Head of Special Collections that was pivotal in demanding a different response from the team in terms of how they would then act in relation to this collection. The ethical dilemmas were no longer buried as a sub-text under the surface of the archival acts of collecting and processing, felt by some more than others. The ethical tensions had entered the team's collective consciousness, impacting the team's collective habitus, their collective 'feel for the game'. The team's commitment to act differently was taken forward through their involvement in a public engagement initiative which took place on 30 April 2015 in the Wellcome Library reading rooms led by Alex Julyan, a Visual Artist and Wellcome Engagement Fellow. Alex invited Helen Wakely from the Special Collections team to participate in a public discussion around the curation of the Audrey Amiss Archive along with: a representative from the Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising; a representative from Archiving the Arts at the National Archives; and myself<sup>15</sup>. At that engagement event, Alex and Helen outlined the purpose of the public discussion in the following terms:

Helen Wakely: [The Audrey Amiss Archive] is a test collection for us - how we can think of creative ways to engage users with it, perhaps different audiences than we normally have, so people with different backgrounds [...] We got it last year, it was serendipitously offered to us by the family of the woman who created all this material. She died in her 80s and her niece and nephew primarily were looking for a place to put it because they recognized the value of the whole collection that represents her entire life and all her interests. So they came to us, they sought *us* out, and we thought it was a fantastic collection initially because it documents a lot of Audrey's health issues. So that was the hook I think, the reason they chose us, but the more we looked at it the more we thought, well we don't just want to pigeonhole it as 'patient experience' or a 'health diary'. There is more going on in here, so what we want to get out of this event is some initial ideas on how can we think about describing or promoting or showing this to the public without forcing them to think a particular way about it.  
[...]

Alex Julyan: When Helen first mentioned them [the scrapbooks] to me, my first desire was I have got to see these they sound amazing. Yet my first encounter with them was in a way quite uncomfortable, because I had approached them in terms

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<sup>15</sup> Permission to use transcribed extracts from the recording was sought from Alex Julyan. Participants have been named with consent.



of, this is someone with a mental illness, an illness that is medically well defined and well understood to a degree, and am I supposed to be looking at this collection through that filter of Audrey's mental illness, her schizophrenia? Yet the more I looked at the scrap book, the more it felt very familiar to me as an artist. Most artist's I know, and I include myself in this, keep scraps, archives, cupboards full of stuff, books full of stuff, throw away items that perhaps other people wouldn't place any value on [...] I am just thinking of my own studio at the moment and on the floor I have about a hundred pieces of cardboard that I have cut out of cereal packets [laughter], now suddenly there is this very strong connection [between me and Audrey], and I suppose for me it raised this fundamental question of how do we approach this material? And how do the library allow us to approach this? In other words, how should they define it in the catalogue, what other materials could be put with this archive to help us interpret it or should they be left as they are in a pure form for people to encounter them as they encounter them? As a library involved in public engagement, how does the library enable people to access this material in a way that is fruitful and true?

Helen Wakely: It's a bit of a catch 22 because basically people can only use this material if they know that we have it, but how do we let them know we have it without steering them too definitively?



### Figure 10.2: Audrey's Protest Placards

Image reproduced with permission from © Steve Weatherall

Available from: <http://intensecolours.blogspot.co.uk/2014/07/those-paintings-links-in-full.html>

The discussion itself laid out the ethical issues connected with this material, including the fact that Audrey is dead and therefore hasn't had a say in her material being donated to the archive. There was discussion around the extent to which it is possible to disentangle from the collection what frames Audrey might have been more or less comfortable with having imposed on her material. I brought into the discussion some of the placards created by Audrey which can be found in the collection (Figure 10.2) which she created when she was sectioned in various mental institutions - 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it' - is that a self-reference that she disputed her diagnosis? Would she be uncomfortable with her archive being placed under a medical diagnostic frame? And if so, what does that mean in terms of the Wellcome's responsibility to curate this collection ethically? This led into a broader debate around archives and the degree to which the creator's wishes over their material needs to be upheld, with examples given of creative individuals who wanted their material to be burnt and yet archivists and family members have gone against those wishes and saved the material due to its overwhelming value. There was also an underlying discussion on the public verses private divide, and whether it is ethical to open up private material like Audrey's scrapbooks to the public gaze without the explicit permission of the creator. Some members of the public were entirely caught up in a medical frame when approaching the material on display for them to look at, talking about Audrey firmly as a schizophrenic. Others raised concern over the diagnostic language being placed over Audrey in the discussion. My participation in the discussion was an opportunity to use what I have learnt from working with Dolly, Peter, Stuart and Andrew to continue to draw attention to the complex ethical issues sitting around representation in mental health archives:

Alex: I am wondering if we can send Helen away with some ideas of how to manage the cataloguing of this collection [...]are there any conclusions or questions, I always like to end the session on questions rather than a concrete conclusion [...]Anna any thoughts to send us away with?

Anna: the random things going through my mind that might come out fluently and might not, but it's something to do with value. So I see part of the value of this collection as being that it makes us confront some of what we think and feel about mental health, and how we frame people because of what we know of their diagnosis. So problematizing that and surfacing it so that we are forced to confront

some of our own assumptions, is a valuable thing about this collection - the idea that it makes us think about how we categorize people, and how we then feel we have the right to pour over them and diagnose them all over again, as opposed to if we were just approaching Audrey as an artist, would we pigeon hole her to the same degree? So that value of forcing us to confront our ways of seeing and knowing, and what that says about us. I think that there is potential within the collection and the way it is framed to allow us to explore some of that tension in a reflective way.

Alex: I think what is really interesting about that approach is – well I keep thinking about a catalogue entry. Well a classic Wellcome catalogue entry doesn't accommodate that approach, so perhaps the catalogue entry needs to be a series of questions, rather than a series of rather hierarchical facts.

Helen: Yes there might be a way round it in term of linking things to the description, so you could for example have a pinterest board with images from her artwork, it's a shame not to have any of it directly available through the catalogue as you can't understand her without seeing it, or videos of different people tackling particular objects. It's not the kind of thing we normally do for a collection because it is quite labour intensive but in this context it is worth it because of the questions we want to address, it is worth challenging our practice really.

Representative from Archiving the Arts:[...]I think turning it round so we are not looking at Audrey but we are looking at ourselves through the prism of the collection would be very valuable.

Towards the end of the discussion there was general consensus on a vision of the catalogue entry for the Audrey Amiss collection. The vision was that it should not resemble a formal, standard, single definitive description. Instead the catalogue entry should be premised around the series of ethical questions that can be posed around the curation and interpretation of the collection. Taking on board the discussion, Helen Wakely summarized what she envisaged as a potential way forward for the framing and describing of the material:

We have a very formal a catalogue, a formal database sits behind it which a lot of archival institutions use which is plugged into a certain way of describing material, but what would be really nice is if we could have an interface where you could have lots of descriptions of the collection sitting parallel, so that when the researcher came, they couldn't so straightforwardly think right ok, I am looking for a schizophrenic collection, we need a way of flagging up all the issues that sit around that.

Helen's willingness to reflect on the Audrey Amiss collection and to use it to trouble the ethical dimensions of the library's collection and management practices in the context of mental health, and the growing commitment to push towards building those ethical reflections into a new and different way of processing the collection is indicative of how the team's deeper and more collective engagement with the ethical tensions was leading to

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
the beginnings of a shift in practice. However, following my involvement in the debate, I was also trying to make sense of why this move towards a deeper troubling of the ethical issues also appeared to be tied into a significant stride forward by the team towards the adoption of a more *participatory* approach to working these issues through. Through the instigation of a public debate, the ethical tensions around archival representation in a mental health context were not just being raised and being dealt with *internally* by the team but were being opened up and out for the public and invited others to contribute ideas to. Was the public debate indicative that a growing momentum was gathering behind an attitudinal and practical shift towards participatory approaches as a means of democratizing the archive within the Special Collections team?

### **A more radical shift?**

My perception of a gathering momentum behind a more radical shift in approach by the Special Collections team was also shaped by my attendance at the launch of the MIND archive on 26 June 2015, an event organized by the Wellcome Library. The audience was predominately made up of academic historians with a specialism in researching mental health, alongside several archivists both internal and external to the Wellcome, and a few survivors. After the very first conference session Andrew Roberts, who is founder of the Survivor History Group (see Chapter 9), made a comment that seemed to impact heavily on the audience and in fact set the tone for the whole conference. Andrew talked about how he feels when being confronted by academics talking about the history of mental health. His response having lived through what they are seeking to shed light on is to recognize the fundamental disjoin between what is learnt through an academic historian's re-presentation of the official records and his experiential knowledge that tells a different story. Andrew then turned this comment into a direct challenge to the Wellcome Library that, given this disjoin exists, in what ways will they work to enrich their collections with experiential knowledge and counter-posing voices? Essentially, Andrew was asking the members of the Special Collections team who were present to comment on what they were going to do to accumulate material that can tell the other side of the story? Andrew was in fact posing the very questions that have threaded through my PhD research. Yet I felt there was a difference by degree in the response he got back from the archivists at the Wellcome compared to the response I received a year ago when I interviewed the Special Collections team. The guarded, tentative, voice of concern in relation to participatory approaches as a means of diversifying voices in the archives was replaced by a less guarded, more determined commitment that the traditional collecting approach embodied by the team *needs* to change. Jenny Haynes, the Head of Special Collections responded

that the team *had* to move away from just accepting traditional archives towards capturing and *co-creating* new content and live discussions as a way to move forward. She talked about how the team had dipped their toe in the water of such approaches but how this needed to be looked at again in a more consolidated way. In order to recognize that use of collections and adding to collections goes hand in hand. A year ago, Jenny was framing the same issue with me in the following terms:

Anna: What do you see as the main differences between our approach in creating the mental health recovery archive and the approach at the Wellcome to collecting?

Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections: The difference is this slightly Jenkinsonian approach we have where we expect the organization or the individual to have created a body of material and for them to have decided what is really kept in the archive and then we almost passively take that with a little bit of negotiation at the border. We are encroaching a little bit but not getting involved at point of creation, as opposed to the creation of the archive in a very deliberate fashion [...]by creating as you have been doing you are moving into territory which is not something that the library has traditionally entered. I am not sure we are ready to make that transition.

The issue of whether the Wellcome intends to enrich and diversify its collections by letting other voices sit in parallel to the official, institutional, medical record in a mental health context was raised continually through the conference both by the academic historians and the few survivors who were present. Jenny's response was not to shut these questions down but to suggest that "nothing is on or off the agenda at present". She responded by saying that "we need to move into finding ways to document personal testimony of one sort or another. Lets open up some conversations and see what we can do". My perception was that these questions of approach to documentation were no longer (as mine had done a year ago) creating a perceived irresolvable tension and sense of entrapment into the status quo for the Special Collections team. Instead, the posing of the question was being received as an opportunity to step out into new territory. I was caught up in the exhilaration of the conference, and the idea that I might be witnessing a transition to the archiving stance adopted within Special Collections, but I was experiencing a dissonance, trying to fathom: Why this shift? Why has what seemed so ingrained about the difficulties of participatory approaches and working to co-create personal testimony as archives now being dealt with differently with seeming ease and positivity? Why is what appeared in our interviews as hard and fast, with barriers at every turn, now appearing to give way with much less opposition? Is it because the team is simply deflecting, telling the audience what they want to hear? Is it because my interviews drew out a more

oppositional perspective that detailed the difficulties rather than focusing on the opportunities? Or is this discussion indicative that a genuine transition is taking place?

Returning to Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus, and the inter-relation between disposition and environment, I would suggest that significant changes have happened in the immediate environment that the Special Collections team are operating in that have enabled this shift in disposition towards embracing co-creation and participatory approaches to archival representation as a more viable possibility. During my interview process a year ago, the Head of the Wellcome Library when pushed as to why he didn't feel able to advocate for the adoption of a more participatory approach to collecting archives responded to me by saying:

You are right nothing happens without a champion. At the moment, keen as I would be to see us do more participatory work, I don't feel that it is the right time for me to be driving it. I think that it would make sense for us if we were going down that root to be doing it with much more of an eye on what Wellcome Collection does, so from the summer [...]we will have the reading room as a public space that will showcase some of the library's collections with an embedded public engagement programme, and on the back of that it will be easier to think about how we might change our collecting practices to support both research and engagement activities in the future (Head of Wellcome Library).

A year on, and the Library's new interactive reading room space is now in operation, with a public engagement programme attached and its existence, as the Audrey Amiss public debate is testament to, is beginning to close the gap between collections, audience, archivist and the development of new content. The new reading room space signifies a closer integration between the Wellcome Library and Wellcome Collection, a meeting in the middle and a merging of identity and roles between these two arms of the Wellcome Trust. As predicted by the Head of the Library. I would suggest that its existence as a public engagement venue with an engagement programme that encourages closer working between the library and collection staff, is opening up new possibilities for the team, introducing new ways of seeing and doing their practice, encouraging a more creative, more engaged and more open approach. Another shift that has occurred in the environment that is already having an impact, and is likely to continue to have an impact, relates to staff restructuring. Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections has moved up the Library Senior Management structure, and although the archives team still reports directly to her, she is in a more influential position now reporting directly to the Wellcome Trust directors, able to shape the possible and instigate change in ways that she couldn't do before.

These changes are tied into a broader shifting habitus sweeping across the Wellcome Trust, brought in by the ethos and approach of the new Director, Jeremy Farrar, who was appointed in October 2013. At the time of the interviews, the possibility for major shifts in the environment because of the new director was seen as possible by several interviewees:

Jenny Haynes, Head of Special Collections: Strategically, I think we might be heading for a significant change in direction. The Wellcome Trust said in its previous strategic plan that it is about the 'brightest minds'. That says a lot about what the previous director thought and what his strategy was based on. How do you marry that ethos with the notion of widening participation? We are an organization that says it funds 'elite' science, that doesn't go hand in hand with the aspiration of being more inclusive. Our current director, our new director has a different take on this I think. He doesn't like the phrase 'brightest minds'. He wants to see science a creative process, a more inclusive process, for example he is very interested in early career researchers, so there will be a change I think.

Two years on from the Director's appointment and his changing ethos is beginning to be more embedded, making a tangible difference, shifting the ground around what types of attitudes and practice hold symbolic capital, and should therefore be invested in. This is encapsulated by the Wellcome's response to the Ebola outbreak where the Director made it clear that the organization had a responsibility to act, to be involved, to instigate a rapid response, pushing for ways for the organization to by-pass its usual funding mechanisms in the face of emergency, so that action would happen within days rather than months:

We must look to the future. There will be more epidemics and outbreaks of Ebola and other new or reemerging infections. Yet our response to such events remains slow, cumbersome, poorly funded, conservative, and ill-prepared....Despite great improvement over the past decade, there is still a need for better surveillance, sharing of data in real time, and rapid action based on the available information. But we cannot think that surveillance alone will bring such events under control. We have become better at picking these things up; we now must also learn to act more effectively (Farrar and Piot, 2014).

Although the Director's sentiments here are connected specifically to rapid action to control the spread of infectious diseases, it sets a broader tone for the organization, as suggested to me by Jenny Haynes:

His personal engagement with Ebola and commitment to act, get off the fence, get involved...is helping all of us to feel that we shouldn't be afraid to act, stick our heads above the parapet, get involved (Personal email from Jenny Haynes, 2 July 2015).

This embrace at Director level of a position that is more openly ideological opens up new possibilities and may well lead to a more explicitly surfaced social justice mandate as an underpinning notion for archival practice. Taken together these changes in field, habitus and capital open up the possibility for the team's stance on participation, inclusivity, representation, engagement and practice to significantly transition. Going forward, as drawn out at the MIND conference, there is much thinking that needs to be done to consider the nature of the 'participatory approach' instigated by the Wellcome in the context of mental health, and the ways in which the team can find ways to involve different sections of the mental health community in enriching and developing the collections. It will be a challenge for the team to find ways of operating that are 'with' and not 'on' the collectives and individuals involved in the documentation process, and it will be interesting to see just how far the centrality of the archivist as professional expert might shift as a result. However, what I sense is that in awareness of the challenges, this is the moment in which the team are poised on the edge of a radical shift. There is now an opening from which there is a possibility for the team to tackle these tensions directly.

This chapter has sought to illustrate the complex layers that sit around a disentanglement of the Wellcome Library's approach to participation and representation in the context of mental health. The attitudes and practice embodied by the team, have at times appeared hard and bounded, and I came away from the interviews within an overarching impression that even though there was a desire to bring about change there was an overwhelming sense of the irresolvable tensions involved in adopting participatory approaches as a means of diversifying the mental health related collections. There was the undesirability of challenging professional expertise and control, the undesirability of moving away from traditional collecting approaches towards co-produced content, the difficulties bound up in collecting more personal experientially orientated archival material, and the difficulties and undesirability of negotiating relationships in a mental health context. These multi-faceted barriers can easily be combined in an analysis to paint a picture of the team being trapped into enacting archival practice in a set pattern that remains closed to participatory approaches. Yet changes were perceptible, as encapsulated by the team's approach to the Audrey Amiss archive, and reflecting on this enabled me to appreciate that the team's attitudes and practice in fact sit within a dynamic network in which field, habitus are continually shifting, bringing perceptible changes to both. Observations of the team's responsiveness to participatory possibilities at the launch of the MIND archive left me with a deeper sense that there is in fact profound underlying shifts occurring, and the likelihood that the Special Collections team will move towards participatory creation and curation of



Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy

archival content with a broader range of individuals and collectives in the context of mental health appears to be a far stronger possibility that I could have envisaged in the midst of the process. This indicates to me how quickly seemingly hard and fast aspects of the status quo can begin to give way to bring about new ways of seeing and doing. I end my interpretation of attitudes and practice embodied by the Special Collections team with an optimistic sense of potential, that habitus and field are combining at this time in a way that opens up the possibility that the team will find ways of working in a participatory way to address the issue of representation in the context of mental health. I believe there is potential for the team to at least moves towards approaches to collecting that are 'with' not 'on' mental health survivors as a means of diversifying their representation. There are still challenges inherent in making this transition, there is still a nuanced set of complexities sitting around the relational possibilities, particularly in relation to the extent to which the team will be open to the possibility that the enacted practice will significantly shift the professional control of core archival activities. However, it no longer appears to me to be a closed door. I too, come away from my engagement with the Wellcome more open and empathetic to the multiplicity of stances and positions from which it is possible to engage in moving actively towards social justice. There is no single path, participatory or otherwise, that can move us forward in and of itself. There is no relational interaction intimate or distant that can lay an exclusive claim to fostering emancipation. There are no concepts that we can grasp or endeavor to let go of that will automatically propel us to the place we want to be. There is no single space in which social justice resides – any single move towards it always carries with it its own set of limitations. It is a continual space of contention bound up by the questions: Justice for whom? Justice for how many? There is, however, a responsibility to engage, contest and reflect from within our contextual situatedness; to continue to ask more of ourselves, and our actions. There is the continuing need to take an active stance, and to make ourselves accountable as we endeavor to open our practice up to emancipatory possibilities.

## Chapter 11: Reaching the Core

Weaving through this thesis there are a series of connected and irreducible contradictions that rise up across my explorations of the 'participatory' in the construction of the archive of mental health recovery stories in the context of the Wellcome Library. I have *felt* these contradictions throughout this process as unsettling. They have been present in every moment where I have felt I am moving from 'stuck place to stuck place' (Ellsworth, 1989). They have been there in my loss of faith in the participatory, and my continual questioning of the 'good' in my actions. I have come to appreciate that these are contradictions felt not only by me, but also by the Special Collections team at the Wellcome Library, in relation to the inescapable impossibility of the archival responsibility placed on them. In writing about the process I have been immersed in, I have been trying to make sense of the experience. This has taken me on various trajectories yet now I feel, here in Chapter 11, that I can begin to make the connection across my writing about the process. I can begin to bring my reflections to a culmination; a fixing of what I sense is the fundamental core that sits beneath this research. At the beginning of the process, and even as I began to write, I felt that what would emerge would be a final fixing in a theory of power. Whilst there are threads of an exploration of power embedded in my narrative, I am surprised to find that I feel no compulsion to follow those threads through. When I speak of finding the 'core' of my research, I am searching for a way of taking the threads embedded in this thesis and weaving them together into something final, coherent, and defensible. Into something that fixes this research into broader landscapes of discourse and thought. I am looking for the repetitions and connections across the chapters, but I am also relying on my emotional response to my own writing. I am listening to my own sense of urgency, and to the things I feel I most need to articulate and to some extent resolve. In Chapter 6, which marks a transition in my research and writing towards the personal, there is a sub-text around the nature of academic research, and an acknowledgement that embedded within my reaction against objective, detached impersonal research is an expectation and embrace of chaos, mess and frayed ends. Embedded there is a movement towards ending this thesis arguing against the necessity of constructing an artificial coherence, that ties the research down from its multiple trajectories to a set of narrowly constrained central findings. However, this creates a dissonance for me. I find I have no desire to make an argument against finding a centrality within the research because artificial or not, I need to emerge from the sense making process represented in Chapters 7 to 10 with a reasonable sense of coherence that brings this research to a satisfactory end point. I need to leave this thesis on the side of clarity rather than chaos. In negotiating this dissonance, I seek to find the middle

ground. I aim to write a conclusion that is both a drawing together and an opening out. To do this, I am introducing a new theoretical frame, here at the end. I legitimate this as a movement that is in keeping with the idea that there can be a multiplicity of ways of articulating and fixing issues into existing bodies of knowledge. It is therefore consistent with what I have argued throughout the thesis, particularly in Chapter 2 in my engagement with Midgley's process philosophy and my embrace of theoretical pluralism. I would suggest that what this introduction allows me to do is to explore the 'participatory' in a way that is both 'new' and 'not new' at the same time. It offers a different way of tying the knot, rather than the introduction of entirely new threads.

The knot that ties the threads of this research together are those interconnected and fundamental contradictions that I sense sitting behind and weaving into this research, and that is what I seek to explore and articulate here. To do this, I draw principally on Thomson's (2005) commentary on Derrida's (1997) *Politics of Friendship*, which I came to through my examination of friendship as the dynamic underpinning my relationship with the contributors, connected into Chapter 8. Using Derrida's *Politics of Friendship* (as commented on by Thomson) as a theoretical base for my articulation of what I will frame as these fundamental contradictions, I seek to excavate the echoes of contradiction running through this thesis. In doing this, I argue that what I am moving towards is the articulation of a tension that is bigger than the 'participatory' questions that I started this research with. The tension lies at the heart of not just participatory archival praxis, but all archival praxis. In fact following Derrida, it is a fundamental tension that lies at the heart of life in *all* attempts at justice, *all* calls to be ethical and responsible, and *all* attempted enactments of democracy. Towards the end of this chapter, I seek to ask to what extent recognition of these interconnected fundamental contradictions can lead to a resolution, and where recognition leaves archivists/academics like me, who wish to continue to frame their research and practice *within* the participatory. The movement of this chapter, is therefore a broadening out from the participatory related themes that emerged when I was in the process around control, relationships, legitimacy and activism. Towards what I begun to sense is the bigger, more essential core of tension that sits around what I have been aspiring towards. I then move back in from the larger picture to finish by asking all over again what knowledge of this bigger picture means for participatory practices that seek to be embedded in a social justice agenda. I end by articulating what this knowledge means for me as I seek to move forward and onwards from this research.

## O my friends, there is no friend

In the *Politics of Friendship*, Derrida investigates the traditional conception of friendship in political philosophy, grounding his investigation initially in Aristotle's *The Nicomachean Ethics* where the notion of friendship is bound up in the proper constitution of the Greek Polis at the juncture between justice, democracy, ethics and politics (Thomson, 2005, p.12). In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, democracy is 'famously characterized as a political association modeled on the friendship between brothers' (Thomson, 2005, p.12). It is this characterization that Derrida seeks to deconstruct, whilst sweeping into this deconstruction, the structure and limits of the concept of friendship across the works of Western philosophy including its articulation by major political thinkers including Plato, Cicero, Montaigne, Nietzsche, Blanchot and Schmitt. In doing so, Derrida suggests that his principal concern is to find a way to 'think and live a friendship, a politics, a justice' that moves beyond rooting friendship in brotherhood, in fraternization. He asks 'let us dream of a friendship which goes beyond this proximity of the congeneric double...let us ask ourselves what would then be the politics of such a beyond' (Derrida, 1997, p.viii). Bound up in his deconstruction of friendship is his deconstruction of democracy, justice, equality, hospitality, and all related abstractions that seek to guide us in being good to a plurality of others. Derrida begins the *Politics of Friendship* with the impossibly contradictory sentence from Montaigne's *The Essays* (1991), which is a quotation of a remark attributed to Aristotle (Derrida, 1997, p.vii):

O my friends, there is no friend

This sentence echoes through the text, surfaced and returned to over and over, it carries in it a 'grievance concerning the judgment handed down, concerning its givens, and the most accredited concepts of politics and the standard interpretation of friendship' (Derrida, 1997, p.xi). Derrida uses it as a mark of protest, a contestation at the contradiction of affirmation and denial that friendship, and following on from that democracy and justice, necessarily involves.

Derrida begins with Aristotle's classical model of friendship as outlined in the *Nicomachean Ethics* in which true friendship is characterized by the value of reciprocity and equality between those men who resemble each other. Characteristics that then build into Aristotle's vision of both justice and the state. Aristotle distinguishes between three forms of friendship: friendships of utility, friendships of pleasure and friendships of virtue.

In the Aristotelian conceptualization, virtuous friendship is in fact the *only* form of true friendship because it carries in it the characteristics of reciprocity and equality. For Aristotle, reciprocity and equality also distinguishes true virtuous friendship from other forms of relationships such as that between father and son, man and wife, ruler and subject, or elder and younger (Thomson, 2005, p.13). I would argue that perhaps it is this classical virtuous relationship that is sought after, and yearned for in the participatory rhetoric, and it is this virtuous relationship that I sought to create with Dolly, Stuart, Andrew and Peter. Yet Derrida illustrates that even in Aristotle's own account of the most virtuous relationship, or 'friendship', on which democracy and justice can be based, there are fissures that threaten the very possibility of equality and reciprocity. Fissures opened like a chasm in my own experience of seeking these virtuous attributes. I located these fissures in my subjectivity and investment in multiple roles that introduced asymmetries into our relationship, yet as Thomson draws out, Derrida's deconstruction of Aristotle's account of friendship points to a more fundamental contradiction in the nature of such a relationship that will always threaten the possibility of virtuous friendship living up to its name. For Aristotle, friendship is defined by the act of being friends with someone rather than being befriended and is therefore active. This active friendship continues in the absence of the friend, even in separation through the death of the friend. The possibility of the death of the friend inhabits the possibility of friendship, thus friendship is always a priori potentially asymmetrical. This leads to a questioning, a protest, a contestation, as there is always the possibility that my friend cannot reciprocally return my friendship, there can therefore never be a perfect friendship. The concept of virtuous friendship is therefore always already in potential ruin bound up in the possibility of its own impossibility:

O my friends, there is no friend

I have lived this contradiction, seeking to reach the impossible ideal, experiencing the affect of the creeping knowledge of the contradiction embedded in the endeavor as a deep anxiety, haunting my actions. Yet Derrida's exposure of this fracture, the asymmetry embedded in friendship and the impossibility, or near impossibility, of being able to realize 'true' and equal friendship is just the beginning. This knowledge leads to a further opening up, or exposure of deeper tensions within the concept of friendship. This deeper tension is associated with the dynamic of naming, enumerating and counting friends. The 'paradigmatic experience of friendship' (Thomson, 2005, p.15) is determined by what Derrida calls 'the question of number' (Derrida, 1997, p.16). Put simply, and when viewed from an individual perspective, Derrida reveals the fact that there is always an implicit limit

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
on the number of friends I can have. Friendship is defined by the act of loving, and there is always a limit to the number of people I can actively love. This is acknowledged by Aristotle in the *Eudemian Ethics* that 'it is not possible for affection to be active in relation to many at once' since it takes time to test a friendship. Friendship rests on temporality and can never work without the investment of time: 'one must not have too many friends, for there is not enough time to put them to the test by living with each one' (Derrida, 1997, p.20). This introduces an exclusive element to friendship, it is impossible to be friends with everyone. Friendship is always a matter of selection, privilege and choice: 'one must choose and prefer, election and selection between friends and things, but also between possible friends' (Derrida, 1997, p.19). This then becomes a recurrent and troubling question in the canonical accounts of friendship. How many friends (if any) can be true friends? How many friends can one have? The limit to multiplicity inherent in enacting friendship surfaced by Derrida's exploration of the Aristotelian model finds its echo in the process I describe in Chapter 7 where I explicitly recognize that I alone cannot be responsible for inviting more friends into the archive of mental health recovery stories. I was at the limit of my singular capacity to enact friendship. The extent of my ability to enact broad participation was bound by the 'question of number' inherent in friendship. I felt and was troubled by this limit, and I connected this privileging of four contributors to my decision to foster a depth in relationship over a breadth of ties. Yet reading Derrida has helped me to move my gaze away from my 'literal' experience of friendship in the construction of the mental health recovery stories towards seeing and understanding 'friendship' in the realms of the metaphorical, in order to read the dynamic that I *felt* in the process as a more fundamental truth. That friendship's 'question of number' *always* sets an unavoidable limit to the extent of the 'good' that we can do. It sits underneath, narrowing, limiting and constraining *all* participatory processes, *all* archival attempts at being representative and beyond that *all* attempts at justice, equality and democracy.

As suggested by Thomson (2005, p.15), friendship for Derrida is a conscious choice. It is a selection, it is a decision that is made possible by a knowledge of the multiplicity of possible friends among which I make my choice, with whom I am already in a relationship of neither active or passive affection. The prior moment of friendship, that is neither active nor passive, is what Derrida refers to as *aimance*. It is the middle voice of friendship, a quasi-transcendental condition of friendship. It is a type of relational bond prior to any activation or instantiation in the act of befriending. Yet *aimance* is not a present moment in a temporal scheme in which action can be realized, but a pre-condition on which the act of friendship is predicated. As I can never act in *aimance*, I go on to betray the multiplicity of

possible friends bound up in *aimance* by preferring my friends and naming them as such. The necessity of this exclusion, this betrayal of the multiple, is what Derrida refers to as the logic of fraternization (Thomson, 2005, p.16) where the other becomes 'brother'.

The troubling of classical friendship's 'logic of fraternization' rests on a broader Derridian recognition of the fundamental contradiction inherent in the notion of responsibility. For what Derrida reveals about responsibility is that as we embrace the infiniteness of our responsibility to others, we open ourselves to a painful recognition of the inevitable irresponsibility of all of our 'friendship' choices:

If I conduct myself particularly well with regard to someone, I know that it is to the detriment of an other; of one nation to the detriment of an other; of one family to the detriment of another family, of my friends to the detriment of other friends or non-friends, etc. This is the infinitude that inscribes itself within responsibility; otherwise there would be no ethical problems or decisions (Derrida, 1996b, p86 in Thomson, 2005, p.16).

For Derrida, responsibility cannot be responsibility without choice, otherwise it is only obeying a rule, and in rule following responsibility is disavowed. To accept that responsibility *towards* others and *for* others involves choice requires an acceptance of the inevitable *irresponsibility* of any course of action I might take. As soon as I determine and choose a course of action I must betray some others and the infinity of others. As Derrida makes clear 'I cannot respond to the call, the request, the obligation, or even the love of another without sacrificing the other other, the other others (Derrida, 1995, p.68-69 in Thomson, 2005, p.16). Thinking this through in an archival context means accepting that there is no stance or position that can get round or transcend the inevitable *irresponsibility* in all archival choices, all archival processes, all archival representations and beyond. We choose 'friends', and in doing so we privilege. We fraternize with a select few against the infinitude of our responsibility. I/we are caught in the contradiction inherent in responsibility: 'the infinitization of responsibility is what begins or makes possible any responsibility at all, but also which disables the possibility of being able to claim to have done one's duty' (Thomson, 2005, p.65). Therefore 'guilt is inherent in responsibility because responsibility is always unequal to itself: one is never responsible enough' (Derrida, 1995, p.51 in Thomson, 2005, p.65). Derrida takes me close to an understanding that the 'ethical' is inherently bound up in embracing the 'irresponsible' (Derrida, 1995, pp.61-62, in Thomson, 2005, p.66). The 'ethical' is the embrace of infinite responsibility, it is 'the ordeal of the undecidable choice between coming to the assistance of one rather than another', a choice which is 'the necessary condition of responsibility' (Thomson,

2005, p.66). Our conscious ethical choices demand us to recognize the incalculable horizon when negotiating our calculable responsibility, and this prevents us from ever claiming that we have done enough. Understanding and embracing responsibility on Derrida's terms denies the satisfaction of a good conscience.

Through the classical Aristotelian model in which brotherhood and friendship is directly associated with democracy and justice, Derrida illustrates that the 'logic of fraternization' is the contradictory bind of friendship. It is the irresponsibility of friendship, and it is also the fundamental logic underpinning democracy. In Aristotle's account democracy is 'the exemplary politics of friendship' and since Derrida takes this to be an exemplary account of democracy, 'the founding analogy' between friendship and democracy (Thomson, 2005, p.18) is complete:

With this becoming-political [of friendship], and with all the schemata that we will recognize therein – beginning with the most problematic of all, that of fraternity – the question of democracy thus opens, the question of the citizen or the subject as a countable singularity. And that of a 'universal fraternity'. There is no democracy [*pas de démocratie*] without respect for irreducible singularity or alterity, but there is no democracy [*pas de démocratie*] without the 'community of friends', without the calculation of majorities, without identifiable, stabilizable, representable subjects, all equal. These two laws are irreducible one to the other. Tragically irreconcilable and forever wounding. The wound itself opens with the necessity of having to *count* one's friends, to count the others, in the economy of one's own, there where every other is altogether other (Derrida, 1997, p.22).

Derrida evocatively goes on to suggest that political desire is 'forever borne by the disjunction' between the singular and the universal, which is the 'ravenous mouth of an immeasurable abyss'. It is the 'tragedy of number without number' (Derrida, 1997, p.22). He goes on to say 'what knowledge can ever measure up to the injunction to choose between those whom one loves, whom one must love, whom one can love? Between themselves? Between them and the others, all of them?' (p.22) Derrida suggests that what is at stake is the very concept of virtue, whose name must now 'remain suspended, without an assured concept' (p.22). Thomson elucidates that, for Derrida, the double movement discernible in the structure of friendship- where absolute possibility is guarded and restricted by a question of number- is also inherent within democracy. It is embedded in democracy's universal appeal for equality that is guarded by its own 'logic of fraternization' in which the boundaries are defined around the members of one state, or to one set of people, through common identification that is often expressed as a 'violent particularism or an ideology of nation, blood or soil' (p.19). Democracy founded on a



defining bond will always be limited and conditioned, it is never absolute equality, absolute justice. What I am doing here is using Derrida to describe my sense of the broader, bigger, more fundamental structural limits that have underpinned the struggles, the difficulties, the tensions I have sensed within the participatory process that I have been engaged in within this research. In Chapter 9, when I am unsettled by other 'survivors' who approach the archive with a sense of the exclusion of their experience, what they are highlighting for me is the 'violent particularism' in which the archive has been created. My deep discomfort and unsettling that manifests in that chapter comes from a recognition of my complicity in this violence, and in this way I can read the archive as a microcosm demonstrating the outworkings of democratic principles, which Derrida allows me to see as inevitably exclusive and forever wounding. The feeling I am describing in Chapter 9, the depth of emotion attached to the unsettling that I felt at having the legitimacy of my actions and the archive scrutinized, I can now describe as my growing sense of the 'ravenous mouth of the immeasurable abyss' that is democracy itself. There can be no democracy in the terms of the ideal that determines the concept. The appeal to equality has an emancipatory value bound up in *aimance* that is always limited by its grounding in a naturalizing principle- the 'logic of fraternization'. Therefore, 'there can be no democracy that does not sustain an anti-democratic current, no democracy that can be worthy of the name' (Thomson, 2005, p.25). Derrida asks 'in what sense may one still speak of equality – indeed of symmetry – in the disymmetry and boundlessness of infinite alterity? What right does one have to still speak of the political, of law, of democracy? (Derrida, 1997, p.25). For me, this whole process has been about questioning how to act or think in the face of this impossibility.

Ultimately, it is the unsettling and discomfort that I have *felt* within the process that I want to find an explanation for, and in the end I find it is not something I choose to locate or explain by recourse to the participatory literature. It is bigger and more essential than just being about the challenges inherent in participatory processes. So I choose to locate it in Derrida and his articulation of how our familiar concepts of responsibility, democracy and justice are undone by their recourse to the paradoxical relational structure between singularity and totality. So as Derrida shows, the concept of responsibility makes an untenable demand by asking us to answer 'to the general and before the generality, hence the idea of substitution' and on the other hand to respect 'uniqueness, absolute singularity, hence nonsubstitution, nonrepetition, silence and secrecy'. Similarly, justice is the 'demand for absolute respect for each and every other, as other' negated by the 'necessity of law, which can only address the singular as an example of a general rule'. These surfaced paradoxes are part of a deeper structural dilemma which Derrida sums up as *tout autre est*

*tout autre* for which the translation is 'every (one) other is every (bit) other' which points us towards the 'unstable equivalence of the absolute alterity of each other and the being alike in being other of every other' (Derrida, 1997, p.23). This brings us to the deepest contradiction in our endeavors because we cannot think or speak or know of difference without reducing it to the same. In being hospitable, there can be no absolute singularity. As soon as we include the other as 'knowable', 'countable', and 'counting equally' we inflict a form of injustice against their 'irreducible singularity which resists calculation' (Derrida, 1997, p.26). To claim equality with the other is to reduce the other to the same. We are therefore always in danger of appropriation in all our attempts at expanding our 'community of friends'. A hopelessness- sensing violence whilst seeking to do 'good'- this is what has haunted me and haunted the process.

In Derrida's deconstruction of the traditional notion of hospitality, Thomson draws out the same dynamic underlying the concept of hospitality that lies at the heart of responsibility, friendship, democracy and justice. He draws out the fact that hospitality, like all these other concepts, can never live up to its name. There are always unavoidable conditionals that turn the ideal of unconditional hospitality in and away from itself:

There would be an antinomy, an insoluble antinomy, a non-dialecticizable antinomy between, on the one hand, *The* law of unlimited hospitality (to give the new arrival all of one's home and oneself, to give him or her one's own, our own, without asking a name or compensation, or the fulfillment of even the smallest condition), and on the other hand, the laws (in the plural), those rights and duties that are always conditioned and conditional (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p.77 in Thomson, 2005, p.90).

By drawing on Benveniste's writings on the origins of the word, Derrida shows that the traditional concept of hospitality is always limited by the ascribing of a value of reciprocity, and by notions of laws and rights that introduce obligations. Derrida also shows the impossibility of offering hospitality to the 'absolute stranger'. To offer hospitality we must recognize the 'stranger', which conditions the possibility:

We would have to note once again a paradox a contradiction: this right to hospitality offered to a foreigner 'as a family', represented and protected by his or her family name, is at once what makes hospitality possible, or the hospitable relationship to the foreigner possible, but by the same token what limits and prohibits it. Because hospitality in this situation is not offered to an anonymous new arrival, and someone who has neither name, nor patronym, nor family, nor social status (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, pp.23-5 in Thomson, 2005, p.90).

Derrida also points me towards the impossibility of the notion of enacting an absolute hospitality in which the guest becomes the master:

The foreigner...has to ask for a hospitality in a language which by definition is not his own, the one imposed on him by the master of the house...this personage imposes on him translation into their own language, and that's the first act of violence (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p.29 in Thomson, 2005, p.92).

The impossibility of the displacement of my role as master is the sub-text beneath chapter 7 on participation and negotiating control where the ideals of absolute hospitality are undercut by the very conditions on which hospitality rests, and I now more fully realize the acts of violence I have committed in making the contributors welcome in the house (archive) I was constructing. I constructed the boundaries of the archive using the concept of recovery because it was a language that was understandable to me at the time. This translation into a language that I could understand as a hospitable invitation was in fact a negotiation that Derrida reveals to me is 'always experienced as violent' (Thomson, 2005, p.92).

### The depths of the inversion

*Perhaps* to each of us there *will come* the more joyful hour when we exclaim:  
O my friends, there is no friends! Thus said the dying sage;  
'Foes, there are no foes!' say I, the living fool! (Nietzsche in Derrida, 1996, p.28).

Nietzsche's reversal of the Aristotelian sentence is a reversal of the 'accepted priority of the paradox' of friendship (Derrida, 1997, p.27). Through Nietzsche's reversal it is possible to see that the concept of friendship is in fact indistinguishable from its antithesis, the concept of the enemy. This reversal forces friendship to 'avow its other truth'- a rupture 'already inscribed in the speech it interrupts' (Derrida, 1997, p.27). It is a rupture that renders the speaker a fool. Derrida asks: 'Why madness?' Why does such a thought lend itself inevitably, maddeningly to madness?' (Derrida, 1997, p.28). Derrida suggests that it is because it is voicing what cannot be thought of from within the tradition that has been handed down. It makes a case pressed against the 'metaphysicians of all ages', precisely at the point where they stop in their typical prejudice and their 'fundamental faith' in antithetical values (Derrida, 1997, p.30). It is voicing the impossible, unthinkable truth:

'This they cannot think, it frightens them, they are not able to endure the contamination coming from what is beyond both antithetical values. Despite the value that is accorded to the 'true' and to the 'veracious', it is altogether possible

(*es ware*) that *the very thing* constitutive of the 'value of good and honoured things' – and virtue (*arate*) is one of them – is related, knotted, entangled (*verwandt, verknüpft, verhakelt*) perhaps (*vielleicht*) identical in its essence – (*wesengleich*) to its antithesis, to wicked things. 'Perhaps!' (*Vielleicht!*) (Derrida, 1997, p.30).

Derrida pays great attention to the 'perhaps' encapsulated in this knowledge. It is the contamination of the virtuous and good which forces us to the madness associated with doing away with our inherited fundamentals, our givens, moving us to finally remove the 'pigtail' and the 'wig of good conscience' (Derrida, 1997, p.31). The 'perhaps' is the suspension that the doing away of antithetical values draws us into. He asks:

What would a future be if the decision were able to be programmed, and if the risk [*'alea*], the uncertainty, the unstable uncertainty, the inassurance of the 'perhaps'; were not suspended on it at the opening of what comes, flush with the event, within it and with an open heart? What would remain to come should the inassurance, the limited assurance of the perhaps, not hold its breath in an 'epoch'. To allow what is to come to appear to come – in order to open up, precisely, a concatenation of cause and effects, by necessarily disjoining a certain necessity of order, by interrupting it and inscribing therein simply its possible interruption? This suspension, the imminence of an interruption, can be called the other, the revolution, or chaos; it is in any case the risk of instability...to think friendship with an open heart – that is, to think it as close as possible to its opposite – one must perhaps be able to think the *perhaps*, which is to say that one must be able to say it and to *make* of it, in saying it, an event: perhaps, *vielleicht*, *perhaps* – the English word refers more directly to chance (*hap, perchance*) and to the event of what may *happen* (Derrida, 1997, p.29).

To embrace the fall of antithetical values is to be suspended in an awareness of *aimance* where there are no distinctions between friend and enemy, but it is to embrace *aimance* alongside a recognition of its unattainability. It is to acknowledge that as soon as we act out friendship the possibility in *aimance* is immediately effaced, because it is precisely in that moment of friendship that we exclude others and we make enemies. To embrace the fall of antithetical values is to accept that friendship is always an act of enmity, whilst still holding on to *aimance* as a possibility. This is to act in the knowledge of the always 'to come', never reachable, never possible, never attainable, always deferred, it is to act in the moment of 'perhaps':

Because it is unheard of, a totally new experience of the *perhaps*. That no metaphysician can yet have dared to think. A possible without possibilization must prevail over the impossible. The possibilization of the impossible must remain at one and the same time as undecidable (Derrida, 1997, p.29).

## Acting in recognition of irreducible contradiction: Derrida's 'Democracy-to-Come'

What can be the response to what I find at the core of this research? These irreducible contradictions that render the ideals of the participatory, of justice, democracy, and hospitality as always impossible, and bind the outworkings of these ideals to their antithetical opposites, to violence and exclusion. Utter hopelessness? A sense of the futility in all attempts to do 'good'? A paralysis? An inability to act? At times in this process that is how I have *felt*, as I have sensed these contradictions without being able to fully articulate them in the moment. Nothing is ever good enough, participatory enough, just enough, hospitable enough, democratic enough. So what do I/we do when we still want to strive towards better, less violent, more equal ways of enacting archival practice, and life itself?

Many writers have voiced frustration at the 'truths' revealed in Derrida's deconstruction. He articulates to me the irreducible contamination in all my idealisms, the irresponsibility in responsibility, inhospitality in hospitality, injustice in justice, enmity in friendship – until nothing appears pure, nothing virtuous. Negri describes deconstruction as a 'regressive pause' immersed in an 'aura of nostalgia' (Negri, 1999, p.8 in Thomson, 2005, p.186). For him, it is a pause that fails to provide any practical tools in the struggle against exploitation, rendering its implications 'elusive and frankly ungraspable' (Negri, 1999, p.8 in Thomson, 2005, p.186). Lather sums up this opposition to deconstruction:

Reception of the "post."—Nihilism/nothing outside the text.—Conflating ideology critique and deconstruction.—Applied post.—Praxis under erasure.—Caught between an ungraspable call and a setting-to-work.—The work of mourning (2007, p.101).

In following Derrida's unearthing of the contradictions that emanate from the concepts that have acted as my idealisms, and declaring that these contradictions are the core of what I have learnt in this research process, does this not amount to what Rorty has called a 'gesture of despair'? (Rorty, 1999, p.232). Perhaps, perhaps not.

These philosophers of a new species will accept the contradiction, the opposition or the coexistence of incompatible values. They will neither seek to hide this possibility nor to forget it; nor will they seek to surmount it. And this is where madness looms (Derrida, 1997, p.34).

Derrida uses Nietzsche's call for the 'arrival of this new species of philosophers' who are those who seek to accept the madness of founding a truth on antithesis, and he uses the

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy

concept of friendship bound up *within* the call to illuminate the madness (impossibility) in this position, this stance. He asks what are we being called into? When asked to participate, to resemble, in short to become friends in shared enjoyment of this new philosophy? How is this possible? Because these new philosophers must become friends of solitude, they must seek *aimance* (that moment where no distinctions are made) and therefore they are called to share what cannot be shared- solitude. Derrida asks are they not a contradiction, inaccessible friends, without a horizon of recognition, without familial bond, without proximity, without truth? Derrida asks: What truth or possibility is there for friendship without proximity, without presence, resemblance, attraction, without significant or reasonable preference? How can it be possible except in a figure? A singular community? A community of social disaggregation, is that not a challenge to good sense? In raising these questions Derrida is re-orientating friendship back to, or recognizing in friendship, its continued non-reciprocity, dissymmetry, and disproportion, to the impossibility of received or returned hospitality. He is calling friendship back to the irreducible precedence of the other, and he is asking what doing this means. What are we left with? Is it possible? Does it not surmount to utter alienation? This is a living madness that reverts, perverts or converts (good) sense, by making opposites slide into each other in a recognition that the best friends are the best enemies. What concept of freedom? Of equality are we then talking about? What are the political consequences and implications, notably with regard to democracy of such a rupture in reciprocity? Is there the possibility of another democracy, another justice? (paraphrased from Derrida, 1997, p.35). We only have a 'perhaps', a 'perhaps' is all we have, and it must remain an elusive and not fully graspable and knowable impossible possibility. Perhaps we simply learn to act in the opening, the in-between, the pause it creates, whilst allowing it to remain impossible or simply to come:

If 'new' always means, again and again, once again, *anew*, the appropriative drive, the repetition of the same drive to appropriate the other for oneself, the truth, being, the event, etc, what can still take place anew? Anew? What remains to come? And what will become of our just impatience to see the new coming, the new thoughts, the new thinkers, new justice, the revolution or the messianic interruption? Yet another ruse? Once again the desire of appropriation? Yes, perhaps, perhaps (Derrida, 1997, p.35).

Can this gesture hold a promise and a call to action despite or perhaps even *because* of its erasure of certainty? Can it be interpreted as something other than nihilism? Can it be a commitment to 'face the unanswerable questions' (Lather, 1997, p.104), to say 'yes' to

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
emancipation within 'the necessary experience of the impossible' (Spivak, 1999, p.428), to move in the uncertainty, the undecidability, without foundational 'truths':

The friends of truth are without the truth. The truth – that of the thinkers to come – it is impossible to *be it*, to *be there*, to *have it*, one must only be its friend. This also means one must be solitary and jealous of one's retreat. This is the anchoritic truth of this truth. But it is *far from abstaining from afar from the political* [emphasis added] (Derrida, 1997, p.43).

I choose to interpret Derrida's deconstructive movements not just as a work of mourning, but also as a declaration and commitment to hope. He begins the *Politics of Friendship* by suggesting that the book is orientated towards finding a way to 'think and live a friendship, a politics, a justice' that is invested in the 'dream' of operating beyond the limits of these concepts (Derrida, 1997, p.x). Within the concept of friendship is the hope of *aimance*, of friendship to come, it is inscribed within as an unattainable precondition of friendship, and so too with democracy, there is the hope of a 'democracy-to-come' that cannot be realized inside our current conceptions of democracy but at the same time is present within our current landscape as an opening to 'contestatory possibilities' (Lather, 2007, p.103). In this way, the 'perhaps' can still be the force in which to move. To understand how a tearing apart of the concept of 'democracy' and a rendering of it as 'impossible' can still carry the hope of a 'democracy-to-come' is to embrace the paradox within deconstruction as a political practice that 'while taking the form of a complaint, as an interminable work of mourning, of bearing witness to a disaster' it is still 'able to maintain an element of hope, the promise of something different' (Thomson, 2005, p.41):

The goal is to shape our practice to a future that must remain to come, in excess of our codes but, still, always already: forces already active in the present. Perhaps a transvaluation of praxis means to find ways to participate in the struggle of these forces as we move toward a future that is unforeseeable from the perspective of what is given or even conceivable within our present conceptual frameworks (Lather, 1997, p.107).

It is a paradox because this promise of something different is predicated on 'a principle of ruin within the deconstructed concepts themselves which rules out an ameliorative programme or solution' (Thomson, 2005, p.41). Deconstruction as a praxis is a means of acting *within* the contradiction of the subscribed to ideals that lets the resulting action be questioned by the contradiction (Thomson, 2005, p.38). To embrace deconstruction as a form of practice, as a way to move forward is to embrace the limits of the concepts we operate under as inescapable, whilst not abandoning the call to reach beyond or in

between these limits. This is what holds together the idea of democracy-to-come, as a hope predicated on the ruins of democracy:

Democracy-to-come is not a utopian idea: it is not a perfect political system either imaginable, but to be found somewhere else, or indefinitely postponed. It is the experience of the impossibility of a full democracy which compels us here and now to criticize the inadequacy of the so-called democracies. A democratic system of any kind will always be torn by democratizing and anti-democratic forces. A deconstructive analysis will hope to support the former by resisting the latter, but without any final authority by which to distinguish the two (Thomson, 2005, p.38).

In friendship, in being participatory, in justice and in democracy we are bound by the fraternal politics of deciding for some and not for others. Furthermore, in relation to those that we do actively privilege and choose, we cannot avoid the violence inherent in our attempts at hospitality. However, responding to this situation means articulating political strategies which do not simply seek to wash their hands of this violent inscription. Embracing the deconstruction of our ideals enables us to develop a political practice of negotiation with our own prior political circumscriptions. To negotiate and make decisions at, and in recognition of, the borders and limits of our ideals requires the embrace of undecidability and indeterminacy. It requires an opening to continual and infinite contestation where no action is simply given as legitimate but can always be interrogated with regard to its presuppositions and its context. This is voiced by Matthews (2015), who approaches Derrida through the more familiar (to archivists) route of *Archive Fever*. Matthews reaches the same declaration that we act in the knowledge that:

No set of values, no demand, no political struggle can be posited as good in itself. Rather everything is liable to corruption and to appropriation for other ends, no instance can have an *a priori* immunity against interrogation and critique (unpaginated).

The 'participatory' as a rhetoric, as a methodology and praxis *for* emancipation, always necessarily falls in on itself and the impossible ideals at its core, yet that is not to say that it doesn't hold the potential to open up 'better', and 'more just' opportunities anymore than it is to say that it cannot. I am left arguing neither for or against participatory praxis as a means to work towards social justice. This is to say that all our modes of acting and being hold potential for 'good' and 'evil' and therefore must be exposed to continual critique in the embrace of the *perhaps*:



No response, no responsibility will ever abolish the *perhaps*. The perhaps must open and precede once and for all, the questioning it precedes in advance (Derrida, 1997, p.38).

Out of my own deconstruction of my participatory approach, I am left with my irrefutable responsibility, I am left with the commitment to say yes to emancipation, I am left with the rigorous and relentless questioning of my actions by myself and others, I am left with continual contestation. And so can I still move? *Be ethical? Be responsible? Commit* to concrete courses of action that seek this 'yes' to emancipation? Can I still *progress* in this uncertainty? In this undecidability? In the 'futurity' of the 'to come' that I subscribe to:

I believe there is an enormous amount to do today for emancipation in all domains and areas of the world and society. Even if I would not wish to inscribe the discourse of emancipation into a teleology, a metaphysics, an eschatology or even a classical messianism, I none the less believe that there is no ethico-political gesture without what I would call a 'Yes' to emancipation (Derrida, 1996, p.82).

For all the complexity inherent in embracing responsibility in undecidability, I find that the required movement forward, the action taken, is in fact indistinguishable than the movement taken outside of this 'truth'. What needs to be done is to commit to be involved, to get caught up in the process of selection and choice, to 'make oneself accountable':

One makes oneself accountable by an engagement that selects, interprets, and orients. In a practical and performative manner, and by a decision that begins by getting caught up, like a responsibility, in the snares of an injunction that is already multiple, heterogeneous, contradictory, divided (Derrida, 1994, p.405).

Thomson (2005) draws me to Derrida's force of law:

*We must* calculate, negotiate the relation between the calculable and the incalculable (Derrida, 1992, p.28 in Thomson, p.201).

So 'even if what is at stake is the invention of the impossible, we must act as if there might be ways of thinking or acting which would give the impossible more of a chance than other ways of thinking or acting' (Thomson, 2005, p.202). This calculation 'will not be without risk, but even in the worst circumstances there is no ethico-political decision or gesture without what Derrida calls this 'yes' to emancipation' (Thomson, 2005, p.197). I will continue to move forward by committing to ask more of my actions than they can deliver, asking more of my moves towards participation, towards justice, hospitality and democracy

than I can hope to achieve. I will continue to move forward by committing to a process of relentless questioning alongside movements that seek to calculate, recalculate, and progress:

It requires a *work*, a working through, that combination of self-knowledge and action that will not blanch before its complicities in power, *activity beyond activity*, not passivity beyond passivity. For power is not necessarily tyranny, but that can only be discovered by taking the risk of coming to learn it – by acting, reflecting on the outcome, and then initiating further action (Rose, 1996. p.204, in Thomson, 2005, p.198).

Calculate, act, reflect, recalculate act, I find that I come out of this process maintaining a commitment to the central tenets of action research, continuing to say ‘yes’ to emancipation, inviting and welcoming contestation, in acceptance of the non-innocence of all efforts at participation, justice, democracy, hospitality: the ‘never enough’ moves me forward to demand more:

Rather than trying to legitimate, a deconstructive problematic tries to *trouble*, to look for dangers, normalizing tendencies, tendencies toward dominance in spite of liberatory intentions (Sawiki, 1988, p.166 in Lather, 2007, p.108).

This is the knowledge bound up in this thesis, it is a narrative of trying to come to terms with this mode of praxis – ‘a praxis “after the trial of undecidability,” a praxis of aporia’ - a ‘tentative, contextual, interventionist, and unfinished effort to shift the terrain’ (Rooney, 1995, p. 195 in Lather, p.107). It is a narrative that tries to come to terms with enacting a praxis that relentlessly questions its own actions and turns in on itself towards de-legitimation. It is about the affect that such movements have had on me, the deep embodied feelings of discomfort and unease that accompany these movements. I hope I have offered a narrative of how this has *felt*. Despite this discomfort, I am committed to acting in this space. My coming to terms with this embrace of deconstruction is in and of itself a work in progress, it is itself uncertain and incomplete, an unfinished reorientation. This thesis has sought to represent that incompleteness by embedding within it a “riddling quality”, of a work-in-the-making that as Lather (1997) suggests ‘engages myself as reader as much as any audience in the inferential process of solving the puzzle of its meaning by eliciting questions and awkward evocations of things I don’t understand about my work’ (p.109). In the end, I am not sure on the extent to which I have managed to remain committed to this mode of writing, that refuses closure and continually turns in on itself. It is such a *difficult* space, this move away from certitude and fixity. For me it is, in and of itself, ‘always to come’. I find it an *impossible* space that I teeter on the margins of being

able to operate in:

Derrida offers a “difficult knowledge” (Pitt and Britzman, 2003) to those of us who insist on the worldly engagement of deconstruction. Running with concepts that destroy their own names, we seek an unsuccessful and hence possibly faithful mourning for that which we think we cannot think without. This is mourning not as consolation but as a tracing of loss that doubly affirms: both the loss and the still yet of the yes. This is “affirmation with no ax to grind, affirmation without mastery or mockery, without outcome or end, affirmation without issue...affirmation without exit” (Krell, 2000, pp. 209, 212 in Lather, 1997, p.112).

My need to move towards a final fixing perhaps betrays my inability to fully embrace the undecidability inherent in the research and praxis I am orientating towards: this endlessly open contested space. In one sense I need closure on this thesis, a final fixing that signifies to me that something has been learnt, achieved and finished. I still cling to the desirability of a neat ending and coherent conclusions. Yet at the same time I know that I have committed to the messy, the incomplete, the unfinished, the undecidable. And so I end with what the reader no doubt already knows, that this moment of closure is a false construction. This thesis does seek to say something concrete in relation to the participatory. It seeks to speak about relationship, legitimacy, representation, and activism in the context of archives, mainstream archival institutions and mental health. It seeks to trouble these themes in relation to notions of social justice, emancipation and democracy. Yet, the ongoing learning represented by this thesis stretches on and out. It is unsettled, uncertain and unending. It will and must continue beyond this final moment here.

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## Appendix A: Interview Guides

### Wellcome Library

#### Part One: Your role

How long have you worked in the library?

What education jobs have you had prior to joining the library?

Can you describe your current role?

What would you say you specialize in?

What part of your job do you enjoy most?

#### Part Two: Collecting

Who do you think the library is collecting for? Do you think this has changed over time?

How would you summarise the library's collecting policy? Are you aware of it changing over time?

What are the key types of material normally considered for acquisition?

How important do you think research trends are in influencing what is collected?

What else do you think influences acquisition decisions?

Can you describe what targeted collecting is? What impact has it had on collecting procedures? What impact has it had on collection development?

How does targeted collecting sit in relation to the aim of collecting the broadest possible range of issues surrounding medicine, biomedical research and health?

To what extent are the collections being shaped to reflect the Trust's strategic priorities?

Do you think there are collections that the Wellcome Trust wouldn't want deposited in the library? If so what and why?

At team meetings can you give some examples of where there has been divided opinion or debate on the value of potential accessions?

What swung the decision making process?

#### Part Three: Interpretation and Participation

Do you think the way things are catalogued changed at all in the last five years?

Do you think the way the library interprets its collections has changed at all in the last five years?

What do you think the library's stance is on participation by non-library staff in activities like cataloguing, and collection interpretation? Are you aware of this changing at all over time?

What do you think expert interpretation means in the library strategy? Who do you think is included as an 'expert'?

Are you aware of what initiatives have been undertaken to move towards expert interpretation?

What do you think the library means by the curious public?

What initiatives are going ahead to open up the library to the curious public?

In the development of the WDL there has not been an impetus to harness technology that encourages end user content generation (i.e. commenting, tagging, uploading content) – why do you think this is?

Do you think this sort of functionality will be implemented in the future?

Do your own opinions on interpretative or participatory practice differ from the stance taken within the library?

#### **Part Four: mental health collections and personal narrative**

If a researcher asked to view collections that gave service user/patient/personal accounts of mental health experiences what would you recommend they looked at?

If a researcher asked you to give an overview of what aspects of mental health are strongly represented in the [archives and manuscripts] collections what would you say?

What do you see as the value of service user/patient narrative/lived experience accounts?

Why do you think public and patient memoirs is highlighted as a potential area for development within targeted collecting?

What do you see as the difficulties in collecting service user/patient narrative/lived experience accounts?

Can you give any examples of where an incoming collection containing personal narrative has been appraised? What issues came up in the appraisal process?

#### **Part Five: the archive of mental health recovery stories**

If the library was tasked with expanding the mental health recovery archive to include more content from individuals with lived experience how feasible do you think that would be?

What currently prevents the library from working on collection development in this way?

What do you see as the difficulties in collecting this type of archive?

Do you think the potential benefits outweigh the difficulties?

If you were completely in charge of developing the library's collections is this type of work something you would want to implement? Would it be a core activity, a peripheral activity, or not implemented at all?

## Contributors

When you first got Jerome's email to work on the project, what made you want to get involved?

Was Jerome's recommendation an important factor?

What did you know about the Wellcome Library before we started?

Did you have an opinion about the Wellcome?

Did you know anything about their archive collections?

What do you associate with the word archive?

So when we first met to talk about the project, what continued to make you want to be involved?

When you first met me what were your impressions?

How would you describe our relationship in working on the archive?

How did you find using Omeka?

In constructing your sections on the site, how did you decide what to include?

Who did you envisage as your audience?

How do you feel about having recovery as the theme for the archive?

Was there a better, more suitable theme do you think? Did it need a frame?

Leading up to the launch we had some collaborative workshops, how did you find that shift from working 1:1 with me to becoming a collective and making group decisions?

Do you think of yourself as belonging to any other collectives associated with mental health – e.g. survivor groups, networks etc?

We decided we wanted the archive to talk back particularly to medical professionals and we focused on inviting them to the launch. How successful do you think we were in opening up a dialogue with them?

What do you think the value of the finished archive is?



How would you describe the Wellcome's role in the project?

How would you describe your role?

How would you describe my role?

Who or what do you think controlled the project?

How does the project compare to other creative projects you have worked on?

Who do you think has benefited from the archive?

Do you have any advice for me, on what I could have done differently?

## Appendix B: List of Interviews and other Primary Data Sources

### Interviews

Reference	Affiliation	Date Interviewed	Transcribed?
Simon Chaplin, Head of Library	Wellcome Library	14 February 2014	Y
Jenny Hayes, Head of Special Collections	Wellcome Library	27 January 2014	Y
Senior Archivist 1	Wellcome Library	22 January 2014 continued 5 February 2014	Y
Senior Archivist 2	Wellcome Library	10 February 2014	Y
Archivist 1	Wellcome Library	29 January 2014	Y
Archivist 2	Wellcome Library	24 January 2014	Y
Archivist 3	Wellcome Library	24 January 2014	Y
Archivist 4	Wellcome Library	29 January 2014	Y
Project Cataloguer 1	Wellcome Library	7 February 2014	Y
Project Cataloguer 2	Wellcome Library	7 February 2014	Y
Archive Assistant	Wellcome Library	3 February 2014	Y
Contemporary Collecting Librarian	Wellcome Library	17 February 2014	Y
Moving Image Curator	Wellcome Library	13 February 2014	Y
Dolly Sen	AMHRS	27 July 2014	Y
Andrew Voyce	AMHRS	29 May 2015	Y
Peter Bullimore	AMHRS	1 May 2015	Y
Stuart Baker-Brown	AMHRS	22 May 2015 via email questions and answer session	Y

AMHRS – Archive of Mental Health Recovery Stories

## Recordings of Workshops & Events

Event	Date	Location	Attendees	Transcribed?
Contributor Workshop	5 February 2013	Wellcome Trust, meeting room	Anna Sexton Helen Wakely (WL)** Jerome Carson Dolly Sen Andrew Voyce Stuart Baker-Brown Peter Bullimore	Y
Contributor Workshop	2 April 2013	Wellcome Trust, meeting room	Anna Sexton Jerome Carson Dolly Sen Andrew Voyce Stuart Baker-Brown Peter Bullimore	Summary only
Contributor Workshop	28 May 2013	Wellcome Trust, meeting room	Anna Sexton Jerome Carson Dolly Sen Andrew Voyce	Summary only
Contributor Workshop	2 September 2013	Wellcome Trust, meeting room	Anna Sexton Peter Bullimore Andrew Voyce	Summary only
Archive of Mental Health Recovery Stories Symposium & Launch	9 December 2013	Welcome Trust, meeting room	See Appendix D	Y
Audrey Amiss Archive – Public Discussion*	30 April 2015	Wellcome Library, Reading Room	Alex Julyan (Lead) Helen Wakely (WL) Robert Opie Kate Wheeler Anna Sexton***	Y

\*Recorded by Alex Julyan, Wellcome Engagement Fellow

\*\*WL - Wellcome Library

\*\*Members of the public also present and participating

## Unpublished internal Wellcome Library Reports

Code (used in text)	Reference
WL1	Wellcome Library. (2009). Transformation of the Wellcome Library: Strategy 2009-2014, Staff Briefings 29-30 Jan 2009.
WL2	ClearLeft. (2011). Wellcome Digital Library User Experience Design.

## Appendix C: Contributor Workshops – Example Agenda

### Workshop agenda: 5 February 2013

**Recovery Archive Workshop, Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> February: 1-4.30**

**Location: Wellcome Trust (215 Euston Road) Room 615.**

#### **1pm – Meet in reception**

(We can meet together as a group – if you think you might be later than 1.15 please text me and we can liaise)

#### **1.15 – BUFFET LUNCH**

(in Room 615)

#### **1.45 – Workshop Introduction**

(Anna Sexton)

Recap on my research, link with Jerome, and subsequent intro to 4 contributors

A look at the Recovery Archive as it stands (what we have developed on OMEKA so far....)

Intro to how mental health is represented within the Wellcome's current archive collections, and relevant issues with this representation.

#### **2.10 – Discussion: defining the possible 'purposes' of the recovery archive**

What are we trying to achieve in creating the archive?

Some ideas:

*To provide a platform from which the contributors represented in the recovery archive can share their experiences of recovery*

*To enable PhD research*

*To produce a useful resource to promote the concept of recovery to people involved in mental health (professionals and those with lived experience)*

*To produce a useful resource for the Wellcome's current researchers studying/learning about recovery/mental health*

*To produce a useful resource for audiences that the Wellcome currently doesn't engage with very often to help them study/learn about recovery/mental health*

*To produce a resource that can be used as a platform for challenging public attitudes towards mental health*

*To produce a resource that will redress the balance of how mental health is represented within the Wellcome's archive collections*

*To produce a resource that can be used as a platform to challenge archivists/historians to ensure that marginalized stories, experiences, opinions and records held in archives such as the Wellcome are a)actively collected and b) given more priority/prominence c) given equal validity*

### **2.30 Individual task and report back: rank the purposes in order of importance**

Which purpose am I most excited about? Or see as being most beneficial? Or see as most realistic? Or most appropriate for this project in this setting?

### **2.45 Develop most popular purpose(s) further**

AUDIENCE: Who are we intending to reach, influence or benefit?

TRANSFORMATION: What are we hoping to achieve? How should we develop the recovery archive to achieve it?

ACTION: Can we begin to scope out the overall direction for the archive? What do we need to do next?

Why is this meaningful?

Who could stop the process?

What constrains the outcomes? How do we define the scope of what can be achieved?

### **3-3.15 BREAK (TEA COFFEE)**

#### **4 Discussion: way forward?**

Do we have a clear idea of audience, aims, purpose, goals and next steps?

Do we have the resource to achieve our main purposes?

#### **4.25 SUMMARY** (Anna Sexton)

#### **4.30 FINISH**

## Appendix D: Key Dates in the Construction of (and Dissemination about) the Archive of Mental Health Recovery Stories

Dissemination Events	Date	Constructing the archive – key dates	Constructing the archive – Key dates
	September 2011	Start of PhD	
	2 April 2012	Meet Jerome Carson	
	10 April 2012	Meet Peter Bullimore	
	12 April 2012	Meet Dolly Sen	
	20 April 2012	Meet Andrew Voyce	
	27 April 2012	Meet Stuart Baker-Brown	
	3 October 2012	Omeka.net site set up and ready to use	
	21 October 2012 -7 December 2013	Stuart starts adding content	
	22 October 2012 – 11 November 2013	Dolly starts adding content	
	4 November 2012 – 6 November 2013	Andrew starts adding content	
	5 Feb 2013	Oral history interview with Peter	First contributor workshop
	2 April 2013	Oral history interview with Peter	Second contributor workshop
Upgrade presentation Anna - internal	29 April 2013		
	28 May 2013		Third Contributor workshop
AERI Institute Conference Austin, Texas, USA Anna	17-21 June		
Dragon Café Anna & Dolly	5 August 2013		
ARCHIDIS European Archival Summer School Anna	6 August 2013		
	2 September		Fourth

	2013		contributor workshop
	13 September 2013 – 8 November 2013	I add Peter's content	
CIRN conference, Prato, Italy Anna	28 October 2013		
	11 November 2013 – 15 November 2013	I started adding content to my pages	
Symposium & launch of mental health recovery archive All involved	9 December 2013		
Talk to archive students DIS, UCL Anna	10 March 2014		
Talk on archive at RCN Anna	16 April 2014		
CAIS Conference Dundee Anna	23-25 April 2014		
Paper on archive at Alternative Psychiatric Narratives Conference Dolly & Anna	May 2014		
AERI Institute Pittsburgh USA Anna	14-18 July 2014		
Talk to archive students DIS, UCL Anna	March 2015		
Talk Anna Public History Group London	25 April 2015		
Audrey Amiss Archive – public discussion Anna	30 April 2015		
History and Heritage Adult Learning London (HHALL) Anna	20 May 2015		

## Appendix E: Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form used with the Contributors

### Information sheet for contributors to the digital recovery archive

You will be given a copy of this information sheet.

#### Title of project: Creating a participatory digital archive collection around the concept of recovery in mental health

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee [Project ID Number]:	
Name, Work Address and Contact Details of the Researcher and Applicant:	

I would like to invite you to take part in this project. You should only volunteer if you want to. Choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important to read the following information carefully. You are welcome to discuss it with others if you want to. Please ask me if anything is not clear or if you would like more information.

#### The purpose of this project

There are four main aims in this project:

- The first aim is the creation of a digital archive collection about recovery in mental health that will be preserved long term through the Wellcome Library.
- The second aim is the successful completion of my PhD thesis. For this, I will want to use what I learn from the process of creating the digital archive to explore my research questions. These are about working together with contributors in a participatory way when documenting mental health experiences from an individual's viewpoint.
- The third aim is that the research will increase understanding of participatory approaches to archives. Using the concept of recovery as a case study will be particularly useful in exploring ways of working in cases where sensitive material may be generated.
- The fourth aim is that the research will be beneficial in a practical way by raising questions around representation in relation to mental health archives. In particular, the research aims to raise awareness around the ways in which individuals with lived experienced of mental health are captured in official archives. The research aims to specially address this in relation to the archives held at the Wellcome Library.

#### How can you help?

The archive will be made up from the individual experiences, stories, thoughts, and opinions of those that take part.



I am looking for contributors with a connection to recovery to work closely with me to create a record of recovery from their point of view.

All contributors are free to withdraw from the project at any time.

### **How will we work together?**

Each individual's connection to recovery will be different. For some, the records that are produced might be based around life experiences. Others might want to share their thoughts and opinions of recovery as a concept. Some might want to tie their experiences, thoughts and opinions together.

I want to find ways of documenting recovery that is the best fit for you, and you are the best person to decide about this. For some this might mean working independently, for others this might involve generating material together with me. The technical infrastructure underpinning the archive will enable you to include audio, text, image and film into your section to the archive. The material you use might be newly constructed specifically for this project, or might be pre-existing material that you want to represent in a new way. In some cases, where copyright allows, you might also be able to use material that has been created by others.

I am willing to work together with you to decide how public your part in the archive will be. The aim will be for most of what you produce to be made public on the website. It is likely that the public parts of the website will be preserved by the UK Web Archive, and we may decide to link the preserved website to the Wellcome Library catalogue. However, it will also be possible to generate material that can be hidden from public view. This material could be deposited with the Wellcome Library for restricted research access or could even be closed for an agreed time period where we feel this is appropriate.

I will want to discuss in detail with you whether your contributions to the archive should be anonymized or not. Following the ethical guidelines used in oral history practice, I want to give agency to you to decide on this, but we will need to talk through the choices and implications. We can talk about how the rights of third parties can also be protected in what you produce. We will also carefully explore issues connected to copyright in the material you produce.

### **When and where will the project take place?**

In the first instance, you will be invited to meet me at the Wellcome Library in London. The aim of this is to provide you with some background about me, this research, and the Wellcome Library and its archive collections.

The amount of contact between me as the researcher, and you as the contributor is likely to vary in each case. However, it might be useful to consider whether you can commit to meeting with me at least on a monthly basis at the Wellcome Library in London for what is likely to be at least a six month process.

Between each meeting I will want to keep in contact with you via phone and email to exchange ideas and communicate on progress.

### **What equipment will be used?**

Each contribution will be unique and you can decide what records will be created and how they will be captured. There may be a possibility of using Wellcome Library equipment, such as cameras or audio recorders, but this depends on availability at the Wellcome, so options can be explored following our initial discussions.

For constructing the archive, which will take the form of a public website, I have chosen to use Omeka software which is particularly well suited for collection construction. You will be given a password into Omeka and can use the software anywhere with an internet connection to build your contribution to the archive. I will give you a full introduction to how Omeka works.

### **What are the foreseeable risks of being involved?**

I am looking to establish a relationship of trust with you through open, transparent communication at all stages of the construction process.

I am aware that during the construction process, we might discuss lived experiences or thoughts and opinions that might be painful or traumatic for you to recall or express. If this does occur we will talk through whether it will be beneficial to you to continue. You might be willing to continue even though the process is traumatic. You might decide to change the direction of your contribution. You might decide it would be most beneficial to you to stop being a contributor. If you feel that there will be a long-term benefit in the inclusion of the material even though it is causing distress, then we can talk through how we can work on it sensitively and with adequate support for you. If you do decide to continue, I may ask you to suggest a third party who you trust who can support you during the creation of the material.

### **What are the foreseeable benefits?**

The project provides the opportunity to have your experiences, thoughts and opinions recorded as a historical record for researchers and the general public, now and for generations to come. You will also be making an important contribution to dialogue around representations in mental health archives by being involved in constructing the archive.

### **Will I get paid?**

When we meet in London, I can cover your travel expenses and will provide refreshments. If sessions go over lunchtime then lunch will also be provided.

### **What will happen with the data and results of the study?**

The aim of the project is to build up an archive of material relating to recovery in mental health. There are unresolved issues connected to the ways in which the archive is preserved long term, how it might be described in the Wellcome Library catalogue, and how the material might be accessed from within the Library. My aim is to ensure that the decisions are made collaboratively with you as informed choices.

During the process of archive construction, I intend to take journal notes of meetings and keep records of interactions by phone or email in order to build up a detailed picture of the construction process. I may want to use examples and quotations from this material (and the material intended for the public archive) in my PhD thesis and academic presentations and

publications. This will only be done with your informed consent. During the active phase of the project, I will hold the background research information securely on a research database in a way that ensures you are not easily identifiable. As the project progresses, I will want to explore jointly with you whether any of this background research material is suitable for deposit at the Wellcome Library as additional context to the main archive collection.

During the construction of the archive, I will keep a record of your name and contact details on a separate secure database. Depending on what we decide about the long term preservation of the archive, I may need to pass your details to the Wellcome Library for deposit of your material in accordance with the Wellcome's usual procedures, but this will only be done with your full consent. If we agree on this course of action, the Wellcome Library will ask you to sign up to a deposit agreement. I will not hold a personal copy of your details, once the project has been completed, unless you agree to us maintaining contact.

If you would like further information on the Wellcome Library's access policy then you can find it at <http://library.wellcome.ac.uk/assets/WTX063805.pdf> or you can ask me for a printed copy. I can also talk you through the Wellcome Library's access policy and one of their standard deposit forms. This is so that you are aware of what might happen if we decide on formal deposit of some, or all, of your material at the Wellcome Library.

### **What do you do now?**

If you are interested in taking part as a contributor please contact me using the details given above.

I can then talk you through this information sheet as well as additional information about making a deposit with the Wellcome Library. If you agree to take part, I will ask you to sign an initial consent form.

Thank you,

Anna Sexton

**All data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.**

## Informed Consent Form for *contributor to the digital recovery archive*

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

### **Title of Project: Creating a participatory digital archive collection around the concept of recovery in mental health**

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee (Project ID Number): **4003/001**

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research. Before you agree to take part, the person organising the research must explain the project to you.

If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you to decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

#### **Contributor's Statement**

**I .....(print name here)**

- have read the notes written above and the Information Sheet, and understand what the study involves.
- understand that if I decide at any time that I no longer wish to take part in this project, I can notify the researcher involved and withdraw immediately. Any material that I have generated jointly with the researcher will be returned to me or destroyed according to my wishes. This decision will not have any consequences on my future relations with University College London or the Wellcome Library.
- agree to work to generate material for inclusion in the recovery archive. I understand that when we have finished constructing the archive, I have the option to sign up to a deposit agreement with the Wellcome Library who will preserve the material long-term either in-house or through their partnership arrangement with the UK Web Archive.
- understand that during the construction process, the researcher and I will explore all the relevant issues connected to access and anonymity so that my rights and the rights of third parties can be respected and upheld. I understand that decision making on access and anonymity will be a negotiated process.
- understand that only some of what we produce might be suitable for open public access, and that I have the option for some to be deposited at the Wellcome Library for restricted researcher access or closed for an agreed time period.
- understand that the researcher will keep journal notes and other records of our interactions during the construction process but will not make these public without my informed consent.
- consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study and understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and will not be transferred to an organisation outside of UCL without my consent in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in this study.

Signed:

Date:

## Appendix F: Description of the Contents of the Archive of Mental Health Recovery Stories

### General Description

The online archive of mental health recovery stories, created through the use of omeka software, presents the perspectives and experiences of four individuals with lived experience of mental health recovery: Stuart Baker-Brown, Peter Bullimore, Dolly Sen and Andrew Joyce. This is practically achieved on the website by presenting each of the contributors as an 'exhibit' that can be browsed. I am also present as 'exhibit' so that my perspectives and experiences as project instigator and fellow human (with my own mental health issues) are also represented in the same way.

### Stuart Baker-Brown

After a brief discussion with me on good ways to structure content, Stuart was entirely responsible for putting together his own exhibition on omeka. He describes himself on his introductory pages as a documentary photographer, writer and activist who was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1996. He states that the condition was fully triggered in late 1991 after visiting Moscow and taking part in marching against communist hardliners who attempted a military coup against the then soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. He uses this life moment as a pivotal place from which to look back on his life prior to diagnosis and forward to his life now. He presents his story under the categories of: short biography (screenshot below), history of condition, diagnosis, impact of diagnosis, emotional recovery, physical recovery, the dream of Everest, promotion of positive schizophrenia in the media, medication, present day, the photographer and conclusion.

Stuart mainly uses text interwoven with his own photography to represent his narrative. He also includes footage of the anti-stigma campaigns he front-lined on with the mental health charity 'Time to Change' as well as British Pathe Film footage of his grandfather Harry Baker-Brown who had a sixth sense and could see with a blindfold on. Enduring themes within Stuart's narrative include the spiritual and psychic dimensions of his life experiences as an alternative framework for understanding his 'schizophrenia', along with the importance of empathy and understanding from mental health professionals when dealing with people in mental distress. Stuart describes himself on his pages as his own best doctor, and his pages act as a platform for promoting understanding around mental health issues and tackling stigma both within the mental health system and society at large.

## SHORT/BIOGRAPHY



Stuart Baker-Brown. 2012.

Stuart Baker-Brown is a documentary photographer, writer and activist. He was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1996. The condition was fully triggered in late 1991 after he visited Moscow and took part in marching against communist hardliners who attempted a military coup against the then soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. On his return to London he felt followed by the secret services and fell into a world of anxiety and fear.

He has travelled to the Himalayas and trekked to try and inspire and promote positive recovery from the condition. Stuart has won 'industry awards' for his campaign work fighting stigma and discrimination towards mental illness. He has worked with the media over the years. This work has included live television, live and recorded radio at both local and national level. National and local newspaper articles.

He has recorded various 'in house' documentaries about his life and work and has made speeches across Europe to medical audiences from around the world.

***Stuart Baker-Brown.***

Above: screenshot from Stuart's biography in the archive of mental health recovery stories. <http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits/show/stuart-baker-brown/the-photographer/importance-of-photography>

As a talented documentary photographer, Stuart's pages are enhanced by arresting and beautiful photographic imagery. He says within his exhibit that for him 'photography is a form of communication. It is documentary based, because I am in pursuit of reality. It can also be an expression of my emotions; the mountains are a secure structure I search for and in many ways, landscape, people, or the captured image of a cremation, can all be

'seen' as an emotional self portrait'.



Above: Example of Stuart's photography used in the archive. A Hindu Cremation.

<http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits/show/stuart-baker-brown/the-photographer/importance-of-photography>

Stuart's exhibit concludes with the following statement: 'What is schizophrenia to me? It is beautiful and creative, destructive and confusing. It is very misunderstood, enlightening and intriguing; it is the brightness of day, the darkness of night. It is full of stigma and discrimination and sometimes pushes the boundaries of understanding towards the mind and its capability. It has taken life and given life. It is compassion, it is heartbreak, it is my greatest teacher' (<http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits/show/stuart-baker-brown/conclusion/conclusion>).

### **Peter Bullimore**

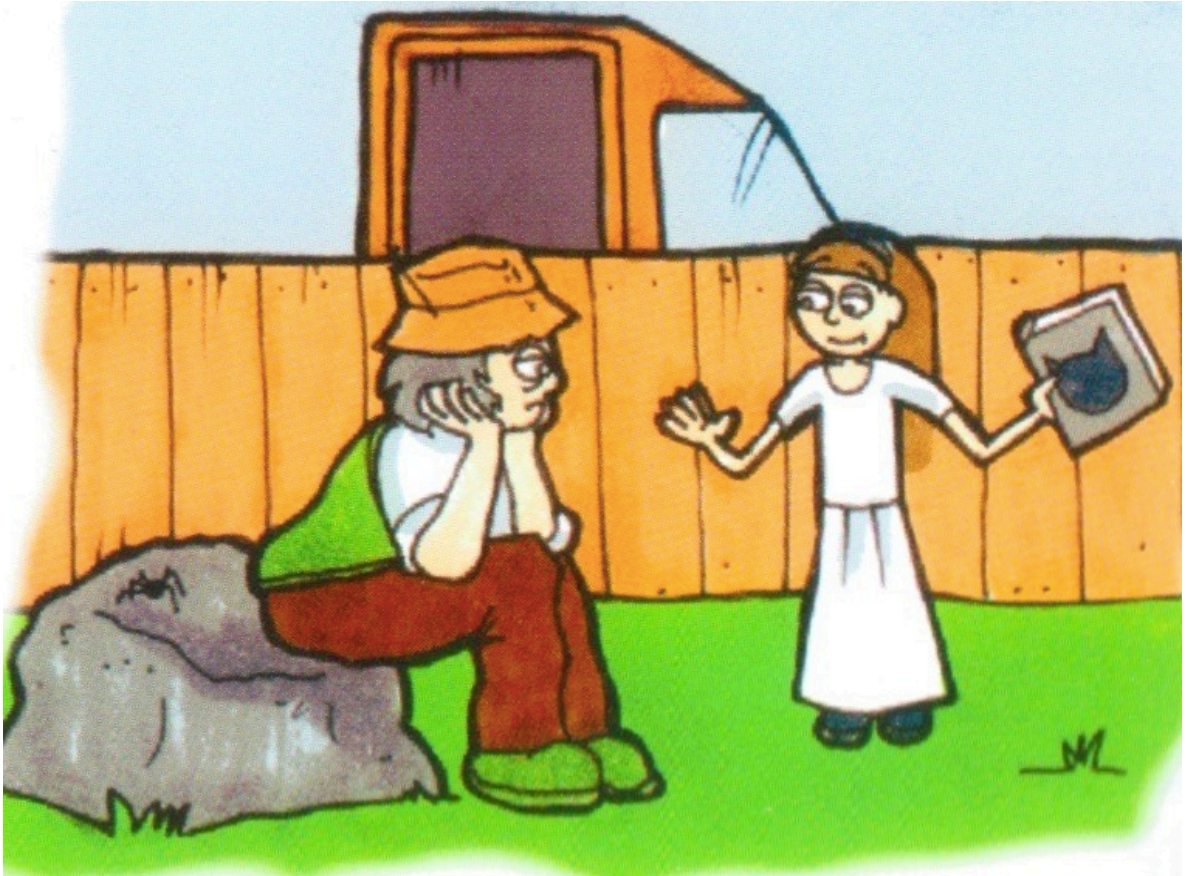
Peter's pages have been constructed around two oral history interviews that I conducted with him alongside film that I took of him delivering a mental health training session to care workers in Sheffield, all in 2012. Text and film clips used in the archive were selected, chosen and edited by me. Photographs and images from his children's book also supplement Peter's 'exhibit'. The structure of Peter's 'exhibit' was decided on by me but came from listening to how Peter structured his story within our oral history interviews. The headings I have used are: about Peter's pages, childhood, journey into services, revolving doors, hope, more revolving doors, confronting the past, life today, what is recovery?, hearing voices.

Peter is described in the introduction to his exhibit in the following way: 'Peter heard his first voice aged seven, after suffering sexual abuse at the hands of a child minder. But as the abuse went on the voices increased in number, eventually turning sinister and aggressive. By his mid-twenties Peter had lost his business, his family, his home, everything. Peter spent more than a decade after that on heavy medication, but the voices never went away. He had to get out of the psychiatric system to recover. It was only when he came off the medication and met people who share his experience that he was able to stop being so afraid of the voices and actually start listening to them. He changed his relationship with his voices and worked through the meaning of his paranoia. Life isn't easy. Peter still hears up to 40 voices at a time - it is worse when he is tired or stressed. But he has rebuilt his life and has even been hearing a more positive voice recently, which has dictated a children's book to him. It has recently been published entitled "A Village Called Pumpkin". He now runs his own training and consultancy agency delivering training on hearing voices and paranoia internationally. "I wouldn't want to get rid of my voices now, they're part of me" he says.'

(<http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits/show/peter-bullimore>).

Peter's perspectives on mental health resonate through his pages in the archive. He entirely rejects the medical model of mental illness and all associated diagnostic labels. He self identifies as a voice hearer and subscribes to the alternative perspective that links mental distress to trauma and life experiences. Exploring his own voice hearing emerges as a central theme, and the exhibition includes an in-depth explanation of the process Peter went through when writing his children's book in association with his voices.





Above: An image from Peter Bullimore's children's book 'A Village Called Pumpkin' showing Eddie Pong and Lou Pump in 'The Mystery of Pump Lane and the Missing Lambs'.  
<http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits/show/peter-bullimore/hearing-voices/a-village-called-pumpkin>

Peter's perspective is summed up in the following text in the archive: 'I still have my voices, they are there all the time, I don't want to get rid of them, they serve a protective function. Classical psychiatry would say Peter Bullimore can't be recovered because he hears voices all the time. But my working week is 70 or 80 hours, if I go over 80 hours my voices get very loud and very destructive. They start talking about the past when I was disempowered as a child and had no control. I look at the metaphor in that. My voices are telling me not to create a vulnerability in myself like when I was a child, you need to take control and reign things in a bit you had no control then but you do now. As a child I couldn't change things but as an adult I can, I can stop and slow down. I need to look after myself. My voices are my early warning signs. If you took them away I wouldn't have them to warn me and I would probably run myself into the ground. I want to work with my voices. We live in a world that is very keen on distraction techniques, which can only ever be a short term solution. It might work for a voice hearer for a while but you can't distract for ever. If you have children and they want your attention they persist until they get it:

Mum – just a minute! Mum – just a minute! Eventually you have to stop and say – what do you want? It's the same with voices – if you continually ignore them they will persist and become angrier. I have got a message for you and you are going to listen! The relationship is not there. You have a relationship with the children whether that's good or bad. It's the same with voices – you can have a relationship with them. You can argue with voices – I've argued with mine for hours on end, maybe I should step back it takes two people to maintain a conflict. Maybe I should listen to this person's point of view and what they are trying to say. Because its metaphorical its difficult to work it out sometimes, voices can bring awful messages but we always say don't shoot the messenger. They have something very important to say – we have to listen to them.'

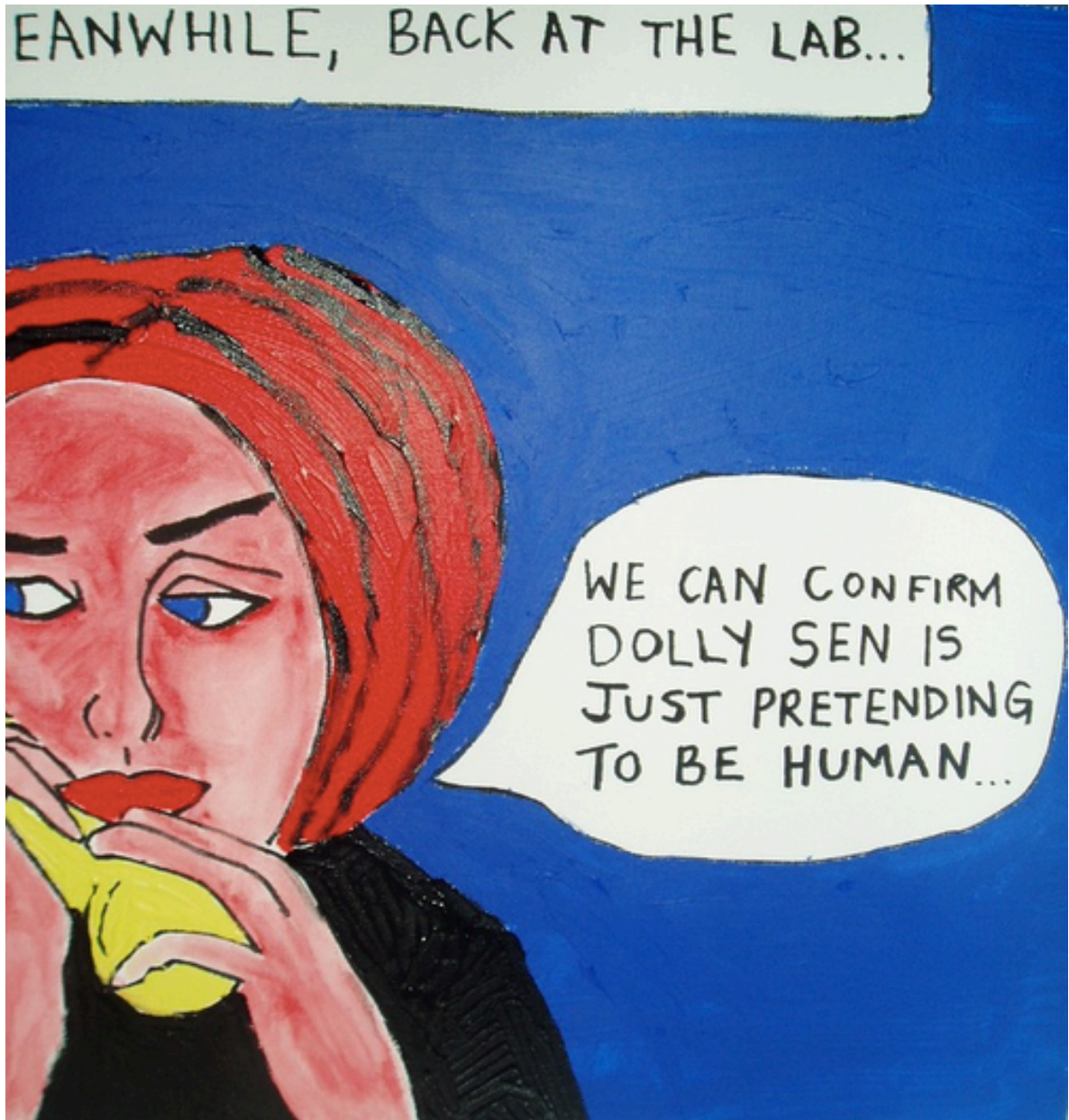
<http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits/show/peter-bullimore/hearing-voices/life-as-a-voice-hearer>.

## Dolly Sen

Dolly and I would regularly meet to discuss aspects of her exhibit and throughout the process she used me as a sounding board for ideas. However, like Stuart, she was responsible for the structure and content in her 'exhibit' within the archive. Dolly describes herself in the introductory pages as 'a writer, director, artist, filmmaker, poet, performer, public speaker, mental health consultant and trainer. Writing in the third person, she says of herself 'she has 8 published books since 2002, including the highly acclaimed 'The World is Full of Laughter; she has performed at at The Young Vic, the Royal Festival Hall, and Trafalgar Square, toured and won awards for her poetry; her film commissions include the Barbican and The Royal Academy. She dropped out of school at 14 because of severe mental health difficulties. She was told she would never amount to anything and was heading for Broadmoor. She believed this and was on her way to heading there when she changed her belief into believing she could do anything she wanted to do.'

(<http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits/show/dollysen>). Dolly used the following headings to structure her story in the archive: childhood, contact with services, one of my turning points, my creativity, is recovery the right word, my media work, the world is full of laughter, mental health and racism, my story is on my skin-tattoos, and LGBT and mental health. Dolly's story is not a straightforward narrative of life events. She weaves her experiences around themes which she wants to explore. These themes are all connected to challenging the current mental health system to think and act differently in response to mental distress. Dolly's humour and creativity resonate from every page and the pages

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can be read as a means of understanding what she means when she says her 'recovery'  
has been about 'finding the Dollyness in Dolly'.



Above: One of Dolly's pieces of artwork. 'My comic confession'.  
<http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits/show/dollysen/theworldisfulloflaughter/humourandpain>

When explaining the importance of creativity to her wellbeing Dolly says in the archive:  
'Something in your life will always tell your story, so you might as well have control over it.  
For me, creativity gave me control in the world where because of my diagnosis I had no  
control. A South American poet said, "Take away someone's creativity and you take away

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their humanity. Give someone back their creativity and you give back their life.” Everyone has their own story and the power to change that story as well.

As for my life now, I can choose how it ends. I may have had no choice in how it started, but now I can choose the characters, the dialogue and the plot. I realized that before this I wasn't writing my life story - pain, past, psychiatry, paedophilia, parent was. None of them could even write a Pot Noodle ad, so why was I giving them power to write my story? Each act of creativity is taking a tiny part of my soul back. You must inspire command of your narrative in any way possible. Creativity is my way of doing just that.’

(<http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits/show/dollysen/mycreativity/mycreativity>).

### **Andrew Joyce**

Like Dolly and Stuart, Andrew was responsible for structuring and designing his own ‘exhibit’ in the archive. Andrew describes himself in the introductory pages to his ‘exhibit’ in the following terms: ‘I was born in London in 1951, and spent 20 years as a grammar school boy and then undergraduate at Reading University. I developed perception disorder (psychosis) and then spent 20 years in and out of mental hospitals (an asylum revolving door patient). The last 20 years have been spent in the community with support from mental health services’

(<http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits/show/andrewjoyce>).

Andrew used the following headings to structure his story in the archive: my life in three parts, asylum life, recovery, ideology and philosophy of recovery, creative stuff. Themes woven through Andrew’s narrative include the harsh realities of asylum life, the devastating side effects of taking psychotic medication as well as the empowerment that he has gained from taking control of his narrative and being creative in representing his experiences. Through his pages, Andrew weaves in images from his autobiographic digital cartoons ([www.SlideShare.net/AndrewsAsylumLife](http://www.SlideShare.net/AndrewsAsylumLife)). Andrew sums up this stance on the importance of exploring personal narrative as a vehicle to wellbeing in the archive by saying: ‘Yes, indeed I find that narrative is such an influence for good. There are several healing and therapeutic vehicles for empowering individuals in the world of wellbeing and mental health in this early part of the 21st century, and I would not disagree that these forces are several, and that each may have a positive effect on different people. I rank the power of narrative easily alongside notions of recovery, hope, choice, control, and even the concept of person centred service delivery and user involvement in mental

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy health'. (<http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits/show/andrewvoyce/recovery/the-power-of-narrative>).



Image of Andrew used in the archive. Described by Andrew as 'A recent photograph of myself aged 60: the artwork behind me is one of my cartoons'.  
<http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits/show/andrewvoyce/narrative/three-lots-of-20-years>

### Anna Sexton

I was responsible for constructing my pages in the archive and I did it without input from the other contributors. I describe myself in my introductory pages in the following terms: 'am a Doctoral Award Candidate working on research funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council exploring participatory approaches to archives. My research represents a collaboration between the Department of Information Studies at UCL and the Wellcome Library. I am using the creation of this mental health recovery archive to actively explore issues connected to 'participation', 'collecting' and 'activism' in an archival context. Here you will find further descriptions about me and my research'. I chose to structure my pages under the following headings: About me, personal motivations,

Archival Activism and Mental Health: Being participatory, sharing control and building legitimacy  
professional motivations, academic research, mental health and the Wellcome Library, creating the recovery archive, and what I do not say. In personal motivations I explore my own experiences of post-natal depression and the ways in which that has played a factor in me wanting to be involved in the creation of the archive of mental health recovery stories. My 'exhibit' ends with the following statement: 'A 'sliver of a sliver' is a quotation from Verne Harris who writes about power, memory and archives in the context of South Africa. Seeing this contribution as a 'sliver of a sliver' is a perfect summary of what I feel I have represented here through my narrative. It is a sliver of the whole context for the mental health recovery archive as it comes only from me, and it is a sliver of that sliver because it cannot capture the whole of my perspective. The multiple, rich, complex and changing nature of my contextual reality does not fit on these pages, it cannot be expressed, I cannot grasp it all, and I cannot represent it...I will end my narrative by restating my belief that representing ourselves and finding outlets for self expression are vital, it can enrich our understandings of ourselves and others and can help us to make connections, but that this comes with a caveat - a captured representation can only ever a 'sliver of a sliver' of the richness of our experience.'

(<http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net/exhibits/show/anna-sexton/what-i-do-not-say/a-sliver-of-a-sliver>).