

8-12-2009

Adult Learning in Nonformal Settings: Cultural Festivals as Spaces for Socially Situated Cognition

Audrey M. Ambrosino

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/epse_diss

 Part of the [Educational Psychology Commons](#), and the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ambrosino, Audrey M., "Adult Learning in Nonformal Settings: Cultural Festivals as Spaces for Socially Situated Cognition." Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2009.
https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/epse_diss/54

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Educational Psychology, Special Education, and Communication Disorders at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Educational Psychology, Special Education, and Communication Disorders Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, ADULT LEARNING IN NONFORMAL SETTINGS: CULTURAL FESTIVALS AS SPACES FOR SOCIALLY SITUATED COGNITION, by AUDREY M. AMBROSINO, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chair, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty. The Dean of the College of Education concurs.

Ann C. Kruger, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

Susan C. McClendon, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Miles A. Irving, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Karen M. Zabrucky, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Date

Peggy A. Gallagher, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education

R. W. Kamphaus, Ph.D.
Dean and Distinguished Research Professor
College of Education

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

By presenting this dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the advanced degree from Georgia State University, I agree that the library of Georgia State University shall make it available for inspection and circulation in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I agree that permission to quote, to copy from, or to publish this dissertation may be granted by the professor under whose direction it was written, by the College of Education's director of graduate studies and research, or by me. Such quoting, copying, or publishing must be solely for scholarly purposes and will not involve potential financial gain. It is understood that any copying from or publication of this dissertation which involves potential financial gain will not be allowed without my written permission.

Audrey M. Ambrosino

NOTICE TO BORROWERS

All dissertations deposited in the Georgia State University library must be used in accordance with the stipulations prescribed by the author in the preceding statement. The author of this dissertation is:

Audrey M. Ambrosino
2741 Dresden Court
Atlanta, GA 30341

The director of this dissertation is:

Dr. Ann Cale Kruger
Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education
College of Education
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA 30303 - 3083

VITA

Audrey M. Ambrosino

ADDRESS: 2741 Dresden Court
Atlanta, GA 30341

EDUCATION:

Ph.D. 2009 Georgia State University
Educational Psychology
M.P.P. 1989 Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government
Public Policy (Education and Human Services)
B.S. 1987 Suffolk University
Government

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2007-Present Graduate Teaching Assistant
Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA
2006-2008 Project Director for Research
Georgia Wolf Trap/Alliance Theatre Institute for
Educators, Atlanta, GA
1989-2004 Public Affairs Officer
Lowell National Historical Park, Lowell, MA

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS:

2007-Present American Educational Research Association
2007-Present American Psychological Association
2007-Present Society for Research in Child Development

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS:

Ambrosino, A. M. (in press). The Smithsonian Folklife Festival: Creating space for intercultural learning and understanding. *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education*, 27.
Kruger, A. C., Ambrosino, A. M., & Kapsch, L. A. (2008, August). *Enhancing communication and academic achievement in low-income kindergartners*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Boston, MA.

- Ambrosino, A. M. (2008, August). *A picture and a thousand words: Using participatory photography to understand learning at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Visual Sociology Association, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Kruger, A. C., Ambrosino, A. M., & Kapsch, L. A. (2008, March). *A drama intervention enhances communication and academic achievement in low-income kindergartners*. Poster session presented at the biennial meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY.
- Ambrosino, A. M. (2007, October). *The world on our doorstep: Community cultural events as spaces for dialogic learning*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Georgia Educational Research Association, Savannah, GA.
- Kruger, A. C., Kapsch, L. A. & Ambrosino, A. M. (2007, March). *Emotion recognition and language predict achievement in low-income kindergarten children*. Poster session presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Boston, MA.
- Kruger, A. C., Kapsch, L. A. & Ambrosino, A. M. (2007, March). *Enhancing communication and school adjustment in low-income kindergarten children through drama in the classroom*. Poster session presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Boston, MA.

ABSTRACT

ADULT LEARNING IN NONFORMAL SETTINGS: CULTURAL FESTIVALS AS SPACES FOR SOCIALLY SITUATED COGNITION

by
Audrey M. Ambrosino

Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in the role of museums and cultural festivals in adult learning. Once considered the keepers of physical and cultural history, there was only limited concern for if and how adults learned from these settings. The conventional view held that museums provided knowledge, and it was an individual's prerogative whether or not to seek it out. The past few decades, however, have seen both a resurgence of interest in visiting museums and festivals and a more concerted effort to understand their value in a rapidly evolving society. This study considers visitor experiences at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, a free two-week festival held each summer in Washington, D.C. Specific research questions addressed are: (a) what are study participants' perceptions of their experiences during their festival visit? and (b) what do study participants perceive as outcomes of their visit? Data for this phenomenological study were gathered through in-depth interviews with five participants and researcher observations. Participants were asked to take photographs during their visit and these images were used to stimulate post visit interview recall and discussion. Study participants' experiences and researcher observations are presented through individual and social themes. Individual themes include the role of sensory perceptions and of participant-specific characteristics and autobiography in visit behavior and

meaning-making. Socially-oriented themes include the role of official festival demonstrators, fellow visitors, and the voice of the museum as communicated through interpretive signage. Comparisons are drawn to current museum visit theory with analysis suggesting that the Smithsonian Folklife Festival offers more than museum visits; it provides dynamic and authentic opportunities for cultural contact and socially situated cognition.

ADULT LEARNING IN NONFORMAL SETTINGS:
CULTURAL FESTIVALS AS SPACES FOR
SOCIALLY SITUATED COGNITION

by
Audrey M. Ambrosino

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the
Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Educational Psychology
in
the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education
in
the College of Education
Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA
2009

Copyright by
Audrey M. Ambrosino
2009

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to many individuals whose guidance and support have allowed me to undertake and complete this effort. Dr. Ann Cale Kruger is primary among these. The breadth and depth of her knowledge is extraordinary, as is her willingness to share that knowledge. Her contributions reach far beyond the academic, however. She has been a great friend and a, seemingly tireless, supporter, especially in times of doubt and distraction. I also wish to thank Dr. Janice Fournillier who shares my passion for festivals and has provided me with essential methodological guidance and direction. Drs. Karen Zabucky, Miles Irving, and Susan McClendon deserve my sincere appreciation for their service on my dissertation committee and, more importantly, for their spirit of inquiry and possibility. Thanks also to the members of my doctoral program cohort who provided me with their time and talent along the doctoral path. Acknowledgment is also due to Diana Parker, Director of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, as well as the staff of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage for facilitating the execution of this study and making it an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

On a more personal note, I offer my heartfelt love and gratitude to my husband, Gregg Lamping, who has provided me with thoughtful feedback, support, and reassurance, especially when it was most in need. Finally, I thank my mom, Mitzie Ambrosino, who, against significant obstacles and with great personal sacrifice, raised my siblings and I, instilling in us both a love of learning and a great respect for educational endeavors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	v
Chapter	
1	MAKING SPACE FOR ADULT LEARNING THROUGH NARRATIVE AND DIALOGUE IN NONFORMAL SETTINGS..... 1
	Introduction..... 1
	Learning Defined 2
	Adult Learning in Nonformal Settings 5
	Socially Situated Cognition: A Variation on Tradition 8
	Narrative Learning as Socially Situated Cognition 12
	Dialogic Learning as Socially Situated Cognition..... 17
	Making Space for Learning 21
	Conclusions and Opportunities 29
	References..... 31
2	LEARNING AT THE SMITHSONIAN FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL: UNDERSTANDING VISITOR EXPERIENCES AT A PROGRAM ON BHUTAN 37
	Introduction..... 37
	Methodology 43
	The Participants 55
	Visiting the Smithsonian Folklife Festival 61
	Discussion..... 97

References.....	106
Appendixes	109

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Art's photograph of the incense burner outside of the Bhutanese temple.....	63
2	Tasker's photo of Bhutanese dance performance	65
3	Hank's photograph of the temple detail.....	66
4	Hank's photograph of detail on outside temple wall	67
5	Julie's photograph of the Wheel of Happiness	72
6	Researcher produced photo of mandala maker beginning his creation. In background, festival visitor questions interpreter.....	75
7	Researcher produced close up photograph of mandala creation.....	75
8	Researcher produced photograph of visitors observing the making of the mandala.....	76
9	Researcher produced photo of substantially completed mandala	76
10	Brian's photograph of the winners dance following archery competition	80
11	Tasker's picture of the weaving process.....	83
12	Tasker's close up photograph of a basket weaver.	83
13	Tasker's photograph of the making of buckwheat noodles	84
14	Art's photo from inside the temple	89

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

It has rarely been argued that there isn't a need for humans to learn about one another and to find ways to create and sustain both peaceful communities and a peaceful world. Quite to the contrary in our present world, the calls for cross cultural learning and understanding can be heard from around the globe, from every sector of society, and from both the weak and the strong. Globalization, a post 9-11 world, looming environmental catastrophe, among other issues, seem to have exposed, in unprecedented ways, the interdependence of the human community. What seems less clear is how we create, nurture, and maintain this community across, often seemingly insurmountable, barriers borne of, among other factors, history, philosophy, religion, and inequality. Of course, this question warrants analysis and prescriptions from a wide range of disciplines, including public policy, sociology, education, and psychology.

What follows in this effort will be a consideration, through the lens of educational psychology, of how adults come to know and understand those who share their world. Beyond simply knowing *things* about others, this paper will consider how adults learn about the fabric of other people's lives—their realities, their aspirations, struggles, and traditions—and further, how this learning is used in reflective ways to understand ourselves more fully. Of particular focus will be how informal settings can facilitate, through both narrative and dialogue, this more extensive kind of intra- and interpersonal learning. To begin this consideration, however, a more lengthy discussion of the nature of

learning, adults as learners, and the definition of nonformal learning environments, is warranted.

Learning Defined

Far from clear cut, how we learn about ourselves and others has been the subject of extensive theoretical and empirical study and debate. While much of the existing research is focused primarily at school-age children, there does exist a considerable body of research in the field of social cognition and social psychology that considers adults as learners and as social actors. What does it mean, then, to know something about another person or group of people? What form does that knowledge take? Once learned, if and to what extent is that knowledge malleable? In what ways is and can that knowledge be utilized?

Basic social cognition theory and research provide a useful starting point to address these questions. At its most fundamental level, humans form mental representations of the elements of the world around them. These representations are organized into schema and mental models. These schemas assist us with knowledge and memory organization, and more importantly with processing and making meaning from new experiences. Piaget suggests that upon encountering new experiences and situations, the process of assimilation or accommodation is enacted (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). To the extent that the experience conforms to pre-existing schema, we assimilate the new information into the schema. When, however, the new experience is either not represented or is contradictory to existing schema, a process of schema adaptation occurs, resulting in either altered or new schema. Learning, then, is represented by richer or altered existing schema and by new schema creation (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). While the

processes are clearly more extensive and complex than represented above, the basic model can be applied to learning about people as well.

Another way to understand both mental representations and schema is through the use of concepts. Individual concepts are mental representations of objects, events, and both individuals and groups of people. Groups of concepts or conceptual frameworks represent how we understand the world and each other. Conceptual frameworks help us to reason, categorize, remember, solve problems, and make inferences, among other processes (Jonassen, 2006). Rosch (1978) suggests that concepts help us to partition the world in ways which decrease the amount we must learn, remember, and reason about. They allow for a kind of cognitive economy that can be used as we encounter new situations and experiences. Clearly applicable to dealings in the social world, conceptual frameworks operate to define and create categories to which we assign ourselves and others. These categories operate at both abstract and concrete levels and are utilized on a daily basis to make sense of our direct and indirect experiences. They help us to store, organize, and retrieve information from the past, as guides to present attitudes and behavior, and as the basis for future hopes, fears, and aspirations (Kunda, 1999).

How these concepts are formed and often times altered are of crucial importance to understanding learning about others. The classical view suggests that as new experiences or information is encountered, a learner attempts to find literal similarities with elements of existing classes or categories. The less rigid prototype or probabilistic view suggests that rather than literal similarities, learners look for characteristic or typical elements that would determine category inclusion (Jonassen, 2006). An illustration of this would be determining, based on facial features that one belongs to a particular ethnic

group. These determinations can often be faulty given that our partial understanding of others may create categories with ambiguous or inaccurate criteria. These determinations are further problematized by the reality that some or all of the defining elements of categories are often based on unverified beliefs or stereotypes rather than on empirical observation.

Using the conceptual framework paradigm, learning can be defined as the creation of new or the revision of existing conceptual frameworks in response to unfamiliar or divergent information or experience (Vosniadou, 1994). However, Chinn and Brewer (1993) remind us that conceptual change is far from certain, no matter the degree of cognitive mismatch. Possible reactions to discrepant information are to ignore, reject, exclude, or reinterpret the data to avoid conceptual conflict and adjustment. Further, cognitive conflict is not always accompanied by sufficient knowledge-building opportunities, leaving frameworks weaker but unaltered. Finally, conceptual change is highly subject to intra-learner processes and states such as metacognition, motivation, and affect formation and disposition.

Leung and Bond (2004) suggest that another useful variable in understanding whether concept change will occur is that of social complexity, which can be measured along a continuum. They suggest that the interpersonal world is, for some people, recognized as a complex one where actions and attitudes may vary across time and context. For those who either can tolerate or who embrace complexity, existing conceptual frameworks are often in need of and less resistant to revision. Closely related to social complexity is the construct of cognitive flexibility. Cognitive flexibility refers to an individual's ability to restructure one's knowledge to address changing situational

needs and to process incoming information and experiences (Spiro & Jehng, 1990). In the language of schema or conceptual frameworks, cognitive flexibility would allow for the dynamic creation of appropriate frameworks rather than merely contest or conform to pre-existing ones. Leung et al. (2008) utilized a variation of the cognitive flexibility and social complexity construct in a study of undergraduates involved in several kinds of multicultural experience. Their findings suggest that extensive multicultural experience enhances one's creative ability, especially as it applies to the retrieval of unconventional knowledge and the consideration of alternative problem solutions. This creativity seemed to be linked to a kind of generative cognition that is fueled by conceptual expansion. A fuller and more thorough discussion of how information and experiences operate in concept formation and change, although clearly warranted, would overwhelm this effort. It is essential, however, to consider how adult learners might encounter information and have experiences, particularly in nonformal settings, which impact concept formation and change.

Adult Learning in Nonformal Settings

It has long been theorized and is increasingly being empirically supported that the needs and motivations of adult learners are distinct from their school-age counterparts. Malcolm Knowles, a widely-recognized pioneer in the field of adult learning, identified six primary characteristics of adult learners (1970). First among these is that adults are autonomous and self-directed. Effective learning is facilitated when adults are allowed to assume responsibility for their own learning foci and, in some case, methods. While there is considerable debate (Brookfield, 1985; Tough, 1993) about whether this quality of self-

directedness is necessarily present in all adult learners, it remains a recognized and important consideration in facilitating adult learning activities (Tennant, 2006).

A second of Knowles' adult learner characteristics is the recognition that adults bring to the learning situation a foundation of life experiences and accumulated knowledge. While it is often unclear how accurate and thorough that knowledge is, it is widely recognized that learning opportunities should attempt to connect new concepts with prior experience and knowledge. The third and fourth aspects of adult learners suggested by Knowles is that they are goal and relevancy oriented. Goal orientation suggests that adults often formulate their learning goals in advance and value understanding how their current efforts will directly contribute to goal accomplishment. Adults must also see their learning as relevant and applicable to their current lives. Knowles' last two adult learner attributes are that adults are practical, focusing on that which is relevant to them and, finally, that adults desire to be respected as equals even in situations of unequal knowledge and power.

Another widely recognized (Knowles, 1970; Mackeracher, 2004; Tennant, 2006) set of differences between adult and child learners is in sources of motivation for learning. The six most recognized sources of motivation for adult learners are the development and maintenance of social relationships, compliance with external expectations, the betterment of social welfare, personal advancement, the desire for escape and stimulation, and cognitive interest. Also, unlike most traditional school-age learners, adults must also contend with significant barriers to learning activity participation including constraints on time and money, family obligations, past negative experiences with learning, and lack of information.

Research regarding adult learning in nonformal settings is in its relative infancy. Learning activities which are organized but take place outside of the classroom and school building are gaining in popularity and increasingly being recognized as valuable educational opportunities, especially for adult learners (Falk & Dierking, 2000). These include exhibitions and activities in museums, science centers, zoos, aquariums, historical parks, and at festivals and events. While visitors come to museums and other similar settings for purposes other than learning, researchers have determined that a large number of visitors are adults and that education is the most often cited motivation for visiting (Falk & Dierking, 2000).

While variations amongst settings and programs are extensive, nonformal learning experiences are often characterized by voluntary and self-directed participation. While learners may determine the goals and assess the relevance of the experience, they are often, however, not in control of the means of instruction, such as exhibit content, program offerings, and level of interaction allowed (Falk & Dierking, 2000). Recent scholarship and research has suggested that what is important to learning in these settings is less about the transmission of defined knowledge products and more about how an exhibit or program contributes to what a person “knows, believes, feels, or is capable of doing” (Falk & Dierking, 2000, p. 12). In a similar vein, Roberts (1997) suggests that the museum experience must be considered in the context of the visitor’s ongoing narrative. The success of museum education efforts rest in how museum and exhibit narratives interact with visitor narratives, before, during, and after their visit. Smith (2006) contends that a primary value of nonformal education resides in its associational and conversational nature. This kind of learning, Smith suggests, is in response to experiences

and not to preset and presented material. The process, driven by conversation, encourages exploration of alternatives and opportunities and facilitates individual and perhaps societal associational goals (Smith, 2006).

Socially Situated Cognition: A Variation on Tradition

How then do we connect social cognition to adult learning in nonformal settings? It is first important to acknowledge that social cognition, itself, is not a one-dimensional construct. In traditional social psychology research, social cognition is understood to be primarily the construction of a variety of social products. In essence, it is the social knowledge we gain and possess which allows us to make sense of other people (Kunda, 1999). A differing definition considers social cognition as those social processes through which we learn with and through other people. This latter definition is well established within the developmental and educational psychology literature and has as a prime component the role of culture and interaction in learning. An integration of these definitions, for the purposes of this effort, would consider how we learn about one another with and through one another.

A proposed model is offered by Smith and Semin (2004) who suggest that social cognition is likely more than a function of existing mental representations being supported and/or altered. They suggest, rather, that social cognition takes place in socially meaningful environments through social processes. The features of an environment represent affordances (Gibson, 1979) that serve to facilitate or impede cognition. Smith and Semin (2004) contend that while scripts may be the dominant way that individuals make sense of their physical environment, social behavior is likely more situated. While inner representations are still present and influential, socially situated

cognition and social behavior result from continual and reciprocal social interaction with the world. Although highly theoretical, this model has intuitive appeal. It suggests that human interaction is more than a computational process of inputs and outputs, but rather is dynamic, interdependent, and situational. The model also has attributional appeal. It would seem to suggest that we are not bound to judge the behaviors of ourselves and others as simply the physical expression of internal schema, but rather recognizes that we are capable of acting in new and innovative situation-appropriate and enhancing ways (Smith & Semin, 2004). While schemas and potential bias may still be more heavily relied upon in non-interactive situations, they may be backgrounded in situations of social contact. A review by Irene Blair (2002) presents evidence that global group stereotypes and prejudices are not always automatically activated when an individual encounters an outgroup member. The review suggests that the extent to which stereotypes are employed can be influenced by an individual's social motives, strategies for dealing with discrepant information, focus of attention, and situational cues. While extensive evidence does exist to support the widespread utilization of existing stereotypes and biases, this alternative view suggests that interactions in the social world may act as a mediator to the automaticity of social attitudes and behavior.

Many of the elements of the socially situated cognition theory are not new. Again, while a full review is not possible, brief consideration is necessary. Prominent among the precursors and contributors to socially situated cognition is sociocultural theory.

Vygotsky (1978) suggests that cognitive development is highly dependent on social interaction with the environment and more knowledgeable others. By operating within a child's zone of proximal development using tools such as language, learning is supported

and advanced. Further, Vygotsky suggests that we can only understand mental processes if we understand the tools and signs that mediate them. According to the sociocultural perspective, learning and development take place in culturally shaped contexts which are constantly changing and evolving. Feldman (2008) contends that

All thinking is situated in a cultural context, and draws upon it. But perhaps the understanding of human action is more dependent on local cultural materials than the seemingly universal cognition of, say, scientific or mathematical understanding, or is dependent on them in a different way. This may be due in part to the way human actions, which are the target domain, are themselves largely a response to cultural considerations, particularly in the absence of biological stress.

Among many others, the philosophy of John Dewey has also strongly influenced the development of socially situated cognition theory. Dewey (1916/1944) suggests that true learning is only possible through transaction with the world around us. True transaction, according to Dewey, is an active process where the learner and the environment, including other people, are acting and being acted on in pursuit of solutions to real problems. Finally, the contributions of Jean Lave (Lave & Wenger, 1991) should not be overlooked. Lave's work concerned learning in nonformal environments in West Africa in the 1970s. Lave suggests that learning can be facilitated within communities of practice which provide the cultural, linguistic, and historical support that make true knowing possible. While often adopted in skill building apprenticeship models, Lave's findings would seem highly applicable to social cognition as well.

In order to begin to address how both narrative and dialogic learning might

represent forms of socially situated cognition, it is important to identify some key elements through which socially situated learning happens. Primary among them, according to Smith and Semin (2004), is that communication is socially situated action. Summarizing current research, the authors suggests that four conclusions can be offered. The first is that communicators formulate their messages by shaping them to particular audiences and situations (Krauss & Fussell, 1996). Secondly, audiences do not simply receive and accept communication, but rather they decode it, using judgments about the communicator and the situation (Higgins, 1992; Krauss & Fussell, 1996). A third conclusion offered is that communicators use language not only to inform but to influence. A fourth and final proposition is that audience responses can and do influence communicators and provoke accommodations (Smith & Semin, 2004).

A second contention of socially situated cognition is that situations and contexts have active influences on social identity and behavior. Individuals tailor not only their communication, but other aspects of their presentation according to perceived affordances and constraints of particular environments. Intrapersonally, particular contexts may inspire fluctuations in self-esteem and self-confidence. Interpersonally, behavior toward others is sensitive to situational influences including location, others present, and perceived situational demands and threats. Situations also offer many cues which may alter our thinking or behavior by triggering memories, signaling opportunity, or activating intentions (Smith & Semin, 2004).

There are several other aspects of socially situated cognition that suggest its applicability to narrative and dialogic learning. These include the notion that cognition and thus knowledge is socially distributed and preserved. It follows, then, that to

effectively solve problems and to understand the world, we must rely on other people, either directly or through the products of their efforts. This reliance is most often, though not exclusively, operationalized through language and verbal communication (Smith & Semin, 2004). Further consideration should also be offered to the interplay of both emotion and embodiment in cognition.

Narrative Learning as Socially Situated Cognition

Learning through the development and sharing of personal narratives, whether informally, in formal school classrooms, or in nonformal community settings seems to embody many of the elements of socially situated learning. These elements include a focus on communication as action and on meaning as co-constructed through communication. Further, narrative learning would seem to suggest that knowledge is both socially distributed and preserved.

Defining what one means by narrative is far from straightforward. Across disciplines as well as individual researchers, numerous definitions emerge differing on structural as well as content-based considerations. Riessman (2008) offers a useful, albeit general, definition, which allows for a consideration of a wide range of narrative forms, content, and motivations. She suggests that, in a narrative, events perceived by the individual as important are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience. There are several elements of this definition which render it simultaneously fruitful and problematic. These include the nature of perception and its relation to any more objective reality, criteria for determining importance, the complex and often uneven process of selecting, organizing, connecting and evaluating, and the determination of what is meaningful for particular audiences. A narrative may be co-

constructed and thus represent a range of perception. There may be numerous, and perhaps conflicting, audiences for any given narrative rendering received meaning consideration quite challenging. When one constructs and communicates a narrative, audiences may include oneself, those immediately present during the narrative presentation, those with whom the narrative will be shared after its initial presentation, or an imagined or virtual other. One may also consider the many forms through which it may be shared (stories, pictures, videos, dramatizations, among others) and the potential range of its distribution.

Narrative as applied to social cognition would seem particularly applicable in the area of intercultural learning or learning about those different from ourselves. Ideally, opportunities are available for diverse narratives to be heard, respected, and learned from. Further, narrative sharing may offer opportunities to operationalize what Peggy McIntosh (1990) has termed a Phase Four approach to cultural diversity. They can allow authentic human voices to be heard. In McIntosh's Phase Four there is a crucial shift to a more lateral, plural frame of reference, while still recognizing the elements and impacts of a hierarchical and often hegemonic power structure. Phase four learning has an emphasis on cultural detail and voices from daily life. McIntosh suggests that learning experiences in this way can be "wonderous in their energy, interest, and healing power" (1990, p. 11).

A consideration of narrative as a fundamental cornerstone of both adult development and of learning has recently re-emerged within the discipline of psychology. In a recent consideration of the cornerstones of a new integrative theory of personality, McAdams and Pals (2006) suggest that "beyond dispositional traits and characteristic adaptations, human lives vary with respect to the integrative life stories,

or personal narratives, that individuals construct to make meaning and identity in the modern world” (p. 209). The narrative perspective suggests that the fundamental way that humans make meaning from experience is through narrative (Bruner, 1991; Rossiter, 2002). Bruner posits,

There appear to be two broad ways in which human beings organize and manage their knowledge of the world, indeed structure even their immediate experience: one seems more specialized for treating of physical "things," the other for treating of people and their plights. These are conventionally known as *logical scientific thinking* and *narrative thinking* . . . They have varied modes of expression in different cultures, which also cultivate them differently. (1996, pp. 39-40)

Rossiter suggests that this narrative perspective is multifaceted and includes narrative knowing as a constructivist epistemology, narrative as a meaning making process, the relation of temporality to narrative, historic or retrospective aspects of narrative, and the interrelationship of personal and cultural narratives (1999). While there is extensive theorizing about narrative as essential to meaning making for adults and some empirical evidence as to efficacy of narrative in education, there is less explicit literature about how specifically narrative operates to create meaning and potentially lead to conceptual change. There are clearly numerous choices involved in the production, communication and reception of any given narrative. How does an author choose to represent him- or herself to the listener and within the numerous cultural contexts that exist, some obvious and others not so? Many choices also exist for the listener who must absorb, deconstruct, and reconstruct the narrative in order to extract meaning from it. An obvious consideration is that it is a source of information, some potentially new, which

can be used to support and revise existing conceptual frameworks. Braid (1996) suggests, however, that it may be in the process of following a narrative that sense making occurs, as listeners struggle to follow narrative threads and grasp the narrative's coherence. Beyond just providing the listener with more information, following a narrative is an experiential process that engages the listener, often both cognitively and affectively. In addition to the performance elements of the narrative being presented, the listener uses their past lived experience, interpretational frameworks, and future expectation to make meaning of their current experience. This process and resultant integration is in itself new meaning which may add to or reform existing conceptions—in effect representing a new chapter in our own narratives. Braid suggests that

If these narratives “fit” the unfolding of lived experience—if they are pragmatically useful in living or if they are congruent with experiences or narratives we already know—we feel we have understood or accurately experienced “what is going on.” (1996, p. 76)

In essence, then the presented narrative is not only a tool of experience, it is an experience in and of itself. It is worth noting, however, that what is considered “pragmatically useful in living” surely differs from individual to individual, thereby affecting how and if conceptual restructuring occurs.

In a review of the literature, Rossiter (2002) specifically considers the role of narrative in adult education. As a tool to learn about subject matter, teachers often “story” the subject knowledge, thereby creating an interpretive space where the learner can interact with the subject. Neuhauser (1993) contends that stories are effective in learning because they are believable, rememberable, and entertaining. We enter the minds of the

story's characters while at the same time, filling in gaps from our knowledge and posing questions that we need to answer. Stories lead from the familiar to the unfamiliar, providing an avenue for growth and change. Transformation is also possible through our own autobiographical stories where we imagine who we want to be. As we externalize our stories, we are able to locate and assess them within larger contexts. This also allows us to restory our experience fostering learning and experience. Rossiter concludes that there is no one path to narrative learning for adults, but rather the potential manifestations are unlimited, since there can be infinite interplay between teachers, learners, and content.

Numerous studies suggest that nonformal settings such as museums and festivals are sites where narrative learning can take place. The process is far from simple, however, with individual narratives juxtaposed to more pervasive cultural and national metanarratives (Bramadat, 2005; Cruikshank, 1997; Murillo, 1997). The process is also further affected by an exhibition's consideration of the personal and cultural narratives through which visitors receive information and view exhibits (Abram, 2007; Harrison, 2005). Braid suggests that a narrator does not determine the meaning of his narrative for a listener. Rather, listeners extract meaning from narrative as they might from any other life experience. Although guided by the narrator's intentions, the listener, nonetheless, filters the narrative through his or her own cultural lenses and fills in gaps using personal life experience.

The value of narrative and narrative learning is being embraced by other disciplines as well. While not specifically dealing with traditional educational settings, Greenhalge and Hurwitz (1999) discuss the lost tradition of narrative between patients

and medical professionals. Many public health professionals and researchers are calling for a return to narrative thinking and treatment. The authors argue that illness should be viewed holistically. Patients get ill, live ill, sometimes recover, often relapse, cope, fail to cope, and that illness is conceptualized by patients as part of their wider narrative.

However, medical professionals typically do not take narrative histories, but rather focus only on symptoms and observable phenomenon. Patient case studies reveal that more extensive narrative conversations yield more information and potentially better care.

Further the authors argue for more extensive study of narrative for numerous reasons.

These include the fact that narratives are the phenomenal form in which patients experience illness. The study of narrative also creates more patient-centered and empathic relationships between patients and their medical caregivers. Finally, narrative may yield more analytical cues and categories which can lead to more effective treatments.

Dialogic Learning as Socially Situated Cognition

Advanced by scholars and philosophers such as Vygotsky (1978), Bakhtin (1981), Habermas (1972), and Freire (1970), authentic dialogue between two or more people is defined as mutual engagement in search of growth and understanding. As with narrative, there are some conflicting views on what defines dialogue and distinguishes it from mere conversation. Vygotsky considers how language and thus speech function both for individual and interindividual thinking. Beyond simply being an important means of communication between child and caregiver, a child's speech is internalized and serves to "facilitate intellectual orientation, conscious awareness, the overcoming of difficulties and impediments, and imagination and thinking" (Vygotsky, 1934/1987, p. 259). Bakhtin (1981) suggests that dialogue is not merely an activity between people, but is a way of

making and understanding meaning. He suggests that education is possible when words and voices can permeate the self's boundary and thus foster, in students, new ways of being and of speaking. Further, Bakhtin suggests that all texts, whether written, spoken, or performed, are the product of multiple voices having been woven into our own thinking and our consciousness, thus they are inherently dialogic.

A theory of learning, based on Bakhtin's dialogicality, has been proposed by Deborah Hicks. Hicks (1996) suggests that "learning occurs as the co-construction (or reconstruction) of social meanings from within the parameters of emergent, socially negotiated, and discursive activity" (p. 136). What is learned is not a given, according to Hicks, but is emergent and contingent. The mechanisms by which dialogue promotes learning are not clear. Some familiar culprits have been implicated including the opportunity for learners to vocalize their understanding and learning needs, the provision of more diverse information, and the allowance of reasoning and judgment. Clearly, there is much more at work however. Within an effective dialogue, participants not only share ideas but are also engage in interaction and transaction which can be truly transformative for the participants. New conceptions, discoveries, and paradigms are often created as participants push their ideas against those of others. These new conceptions can then be integrated by individuals as learning in service of future experiences.

Gorsky, Caspi, and Tuvi-Arad (2004) echo this call for more research by suggesting that there are few empirically-based accounts of what characterizes effective dialogues. The authors suggest that every situation has a potential for interaction which can be estimated. This potential is realized or not, based on several considerations

including many human and structural variables. Structural considerations include accessibility and group size. If realized, a dialogue takes place, defined as “a discursive relationship between two or more participants characterized by thought provoking activities such as questioning, hypothesizing, interpreting, explaining, evaluating, and rethinking issues or problems at hand” (p. 5). In a study of instructional dialogue used by students in a distance education chemistry course, the authors found that instructional dialogue was initiated only after a learner had exhausted his or her own intrapersonal resources and still failed to solve their problem. Of particular interest in this study is the suggestion that potential interaction is a measurable construct. Further by suggesting some human and structural components which render the potential likely or unlikely to be realized, one is able to deconstruct actual dialogue to possibly identify antecedents and predictors.

Deanna Kuhn suggests that a key element in learning through dialogue involves acquiring the ability to process an opponent’s argument at a deep-level as a way to both clarify and evaluate one’s own position (Shaughnessy, 2004). Acquiring this kind of evaluativist epistemology allows us to ask the necessary questions of both other’s and our own conceptions and suppositions. Kuhn suggests that

Knowledge at this evaluativist level of epistemological understanding consists of judgments, which require support in a framework of alternatives, evidence, and argument. An evaluativist epistemology provides the intellectual basis for judging one idea as better than another, a basis more powerful than mere personal preference. (Shaughnessy, 2004, p. 276)

Puigvert, Sorde, and Soler (2000) offer the example of La Tertulia Literaria, a type of reading circle held for adults in Spain. It involves adults with low literacy skills, reading literary classics, and the dialogic process. The authors argue that in this new information age new solutions are only possible when open equal dialogue between people in a given social situation is allowed. Further, it is argued that education is key to providing the knowledge and tools to participate and access dialogic networks. The process that characterizes La Tertulia is characterized as embodying seven principles: egalitarian dialogue, cultural intelligence, transformation, instrumental dimension, creation of meaning, solidarity, and equality of difference. Cultural intelligence refers to what one has learned throughout their lifetime and their knowledge and abilities that transfer across contexts. Transformation can occur through dialogue through learning and increasing self esteem. Finally creation of meaning occurs when people relate to each other, decide what they want to learn and pursue it through inquiry. It is interesting to observe that the Spanish word tertulia means a group of people gathering together to have a conversation. Traditionally, people would take chairs from their homes and gather in the streets to have conversations with others, to tell stories, and to discuss life.

Wegerif (2006) offers us glimpses of both successful and unsuccessful dialogue from his work with the “Thinking Together” project. His research found that in unsuccessful group talk, failure results from either participants’ inability to transcend their own image and reality, creating a competition for truths, or the opposite, where points of view were sacrificed for group cohesion. In contrast, successful group talk results in individuals often changing their minds, questioning their own assumptions, and asking for assistance when needed. In some cases, this success was manifest in

participants passionately arguing against their initial position. Success also can be evidenced in individuals transcending their own identity to identification with the dialogic space. Dialogue and openness to others, then, becomes an end in itself, equipping people with the tools for shared decision making and democratic participation.

Making Space for Learning

To begin the consideration of whether and how narrative and dialogue can be used together to foster adult learning, two historical vignettes are offered. Both suggest the role of narrative and dialogue in learning from those who struggled for survival within horrific situations not of their making nor in their control.

In the mid-1950s, two suitcases were discovered which were filled with the drawings and poems of Jewish children who, during World War II, had been held within the German established Theresienstadt (formerly the town of Terezin) ghetto. One of the poems was written by Pavel Freidmann who was born on January 7, 1921, in Prague, was deported to Theresienstadt on April 26, 1942, and who died in Auschwitz on September 29, 1944. The poem, included below, appears in many places (websites, books, research articles) and is used to both document a portion of a young Jewish boy's narrative and as a tool to inspire learning and dialogue about the events of the past. Why did Freidmann commit these words to paper? Did he imagine that they might help others, at the time or later, to understand his situation? Did they help him to understand and survive his own reality and suffering? And ultimately, what can and what has been learned from them?

"I Never Saw Another Butterfly"

The last, the very last,
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing
against a white stone. . . .

Such, such a yellow
 Is carried lightly 'way up high.
 It went away I'm sure because it wished to
 kiss the world good-bye.
 For seven weeks I've lived in here,
 Penned up inside this ghetto.
 But I have found what I love here.
 The dandelions call to me
 And the white chestnut branches in the court.
 Only I never saw another butterfly.
 That butterfly was the last one.
 Butterflies don't live in here,
 in the ghetto.

Another more recent narrative was offered by Jean-Dominique Bauby, once the 43-year-old charismatic editor of French *Elle* magazine. After suffering a massive stroke, Bauby is left completely paralyzed and unable to speak. With his mind completely intact, Bauby's only means of communication with the outside world is through the blinking of his left eye. Neurologists term his condition locked-in syndrome. After initial bouts with despair, Bauby begins work with a speech therapist who teaches him to communicate through affirmative blinks in response to the reading of a frequency-of-use ordered alphabet. Bauby, determined to publish a book, works with an assistant to "dictate" his story. He writes, "I decided to stop pitying myself. Other than my eye, two things aren't paralyzed, my imagination and my memory." The 130-page book requires over 200,000 blinks, with each word taking approximately two minutes to communicate. After the book, *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, is published, Bauby dies from pneumonia. From this effort, one could again ask why did Bauby commit these words to paper. Did he imagine that they might help others, at the time and later, to understand his situation? Did they help him to understand and survive his own reality and suffering? And ultimately, what can and what has been learned from them?

While the preceding examples do not illustrate how one learns from narrative and dialogue, they do reinforce the idea that it through our stories that we find and communicate meaning, for ourselves and from and to others. When and if we learn from our own and other's stories may well depend on whether there exist spaces where the construction and sharing of personal narratives is encouraged and valued.

Peter Rule (2004) conceptualizes the notion of dialogic space as those places, physical and psychological, which enable and feature dialogue at numerous related levels (Rule, 2004). Using a case study of a South African adult education project, Rule concludes that dialogic spaces create conditions "in which participants felt free to communicate openly with one another and, in the process, negotiate new sets of relationships among themselves, with the world and with their futures" (pp. 329-330). This idea that true dialogue between ourselves and others, especially when it concerns our personal narratives, can only take place in spaces that are safe and enabling has been explored by numerous researchers and scholars. Implicit in Rule's notions of communication and negotiation is the necessity of interaction between people. This notion of interaction or transaction between a person and his or her environment is also consistent with the theory of learning proposed by Dewey (1934).

Ziegler, Paulus and Woodside (2006) offer both a theoretical and empirical discussion of the blending of narrative and dialogue. They contend that, as has been theorized previously, people understand themselves and their lives, including others, through stories. These stories, far from representing objective reality, embody the values, beliefs and assumptions that one holds and through which one's experiences are given meaning. Narrative learning, thus, is a process of restorying which allows experience to

be reinterpreted to decrease conflict and restore unity. Truly transformative learning happens, they suggest, when one questions one's own and others' assumptions, critically using that process to arrive at more holistic and authentic interpretations. This leads to freedom from meaning systems which constrain creativity and imagination. The authors further contend that this often happens in dialogue. Their study explored dialogue between a group of four students sharing life history narratives in a blended (online and face to face) environment. The authors identified four aspects of meaning making through dialogue: noticing, reinterpreting, theorizing about, and questioning assumptions. Noticing involves a focus on oneself and "making meaning of one's own experience in light of the other" (p. 309). This happened through describing and extending. Reinterpreting involves focusing on the other, and included requesting and providing clarification, finding commonalities, and evaluating. Theorizing involved shifting from concrete experiences of both oneself and the other to more abstract concepts. This involved labeling, providing explanations, and making assumptions. Finally, questioning assumptions critically did not occur often but when it did involved questioning of one's own assumptions. There appeared to be a reluctance to question other's assumptions. Restorying seemed to occur for these participants in both their telling of their stories and in deconstructing them. Meaning making occurred when one "noticed events in her life, reinterpreted these events in light of the experiences of others, and emerged from the dialogue with a new narrative." The authors conclude that narrative and dialogue, rather than representing knowledge transfer, represented knowledge creation, particularly at the individual or co-constructed levels.

Many research efforts have explored, at some level, adult learning in nonformal community settings including festivals. Abram (2007) offers a description and analysis of a program of public dialogues held at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York City. The dialogues, called Kitchen Conversations (to reduce the intimidation factor for potential participants), were launched by the Museum in response both to its growing civic engagement mission and also to address the fact that many visitors were not making connections between the museum content and contemporary issues. In the case of this museum, the primary issue was immigration. Visitors were failing to investigate any connections between historic immigrant narratives and contemporary ones. The dialogues were launched primarily to provide an opportunity for visitors to use the narratives in the museum to explore contemporary immigration and also to provide opportunities for different and often conflicting views to be voiced and heard. Analysis of the program suggests that the dialogues have been successful on several fronts. Primarily, the Museum and the program provide a neutral space that facilitates the exploration of one's story and the opportunity to learn others' narratives. Dialogue participants suggest that such "dialogic spaces" are virtually non-existent in contemporary society. The safe and neutral space of the museum, according to participants, is not characterized by any single or dominant perspective. For some, the dialogues provide a chance to express opinions that they themselves were unaware they had. By externalizing those opinions, they may be informed by a more inclusive narrative and, in some cases, even transformed. It may be optimistic to suggest that the dialogues turn strangers into friends, but they seem to at least lessen the strangeness of the participants to each other.

A study by Puigvert and Elboy (2004) looks at the creation and function of dialogic space for “other women,” women with little or no formal education and limited social opportunities. A review of literature by the authors suggested that dialogue and intersubjectivity, especially with regard to our regular lives and our biographies, is essential to making meaning, redefining experience, and expanding opportunities. It is also a key determinant of effective social action and change. The data gathered from a number of projects suggests that these spaces which represent safe places for dialogue and social participation can be successful in facilitating deep social and personal transformation for women. Specifically, women are able to see how they have internalized external perception of them. Further, they are supported in turning difficulties into possibilities and making new meaning from their experiences. Dialogic spaces, the authors argue, allow for the legitimization of cultural intelligence which values and communicates real life experience and human interaction. For the women chronicled, this was crucial given that their lack of official and academic communication skills and opportunities had left them isolated. Education was also found to be essential in allowing women to transform and expand their possibilities for expression and meaning-creation. The author suggests that “through the process of intersubjective dialogic learning, women began to value their abilities and skills, build confidence in their capacity to further their knowledge and live fuller lives” (p. 359). Women who participated also experienced changes in their social and familial lives, which became more egalitarian. There were cases however, where families resisted the new roles and attitudes adopted by these women. Finally, the author concludes that by embracing the dialogic conception, scholars and educators can work in more interdisciplinary ways,

cutting across education, psychology and sociology to better understand and promote social interaction and dialogue as facilitators of personal and social transformation.

The importance of the interactions in a cultural festival program has been highlighted in Paul Bramadat's (2001, 2005) ethnographic consideration of two Canadian festivals, Winnipeg's Folklorama and Toronto's Caravan. In his consideration of the authenticity of festival presentations, Bramadat concludes that what actually happens at these festivals is far from static portrayals of ethnic cultures (2005). While, at first glance, a particular dance, food, or craft may appear to be a stereotypical portrayal of a complex culture, what actually is presented is the result of a community's negotiation and consensus of how they wish to see themselves and be seen by others. These negotiations involve community members' perceptions, realities, and needs (physical and psychological). Further, the study revealed that apart from decisions on what and how to portray ethnic culture, the festivals serve as a backdrop for deeper engagements between participants and visitors. The author notes that while the setting may dictate that some of these engagements remain fairly superficial, they represent a significant improvement over silence (Bramadat, 2005). Bramadat (2001) concluded that although festivals are often designed to avoid controversy, Toronto's Caravan and Winnipeg's Folklorama are indeed sites of contestation. Participants, by tailoring both the message and the medium of their presentation, seize control of their representation to shape and reshape how others see them. These two study reports were based on several years of ethnographic fieldwork at these two Canadian festivals.

A similar conclusion is offered by Robert Cantwell (1991) in his study of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Cantwell, while highly critical of the festival's

organization, suggests, referring to the festival, that

It is magic, when the frightful and tangled forces that divide human beings suddenly vanish, effaced by the sheer power and excellence, the authenticity of performance on the one hand and by the willingness of visitors on the other hand to recognize power and excellence as such, even if they are unacquainted with the cultural values that inform it. (p. 160)

Bauman and Sawin (1990), who conducted a study of participants at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, concluded that participants in the festival are far from passive display objects. Rather they are “reflexive, adaptive, and critical, crafting the representations in which they are involved” (p. 312). They suggest that to understand a folklife festival, one must attend to all of the individuals involved, including, of course, producers and audience, but also participants. Bauman and Sawin’s ethnographic study which took place at the 1997 edition of the festival is an excellent study of the motivations and experiences of the festival’s official participants.

Another useful connection is between adult learning and arts-focused nonformal settings. Among others, philosophers Dewey (1934) and Gadamer (1975) herald the role of art in both capturing and communicating meaning and thus, in learning. Both consider art as both highly narrative and dialogical, encompassing both production and consumption in a fuller consideration of experience. A recent review of research (Hayes & Yorks, 2007) suggests that art functions on numerous levels to facilitate transformation of individuals and societies. According to the authors, art facilitates a generative learning space which makes possible interpersonal relationships and connections that are often constrained by the psychological, social, and culturally imposed boundaries of one’s life.

Further, art can make conflict constructive for learning by encouraging more inclusive and permeable frames of reference. Arts have been utilized to create spaces for adult learning and community development. In one case (Aprill & Townsell, 2007) a collaborative mural project allowed for the expanding and reframing of individual knowledge into a more collective product. The dialogical space created by the project was both more tolerant of complexity and more open to non-mainstream points of view.

Conclusions and Opportunities

Unlocking the potential of narrative and dialogue to foster learning is well underway. Theoretically, it is recognized that, as human beings, we are drawn to narrative to make sense of our existence and similarly to dialogue as an extension of our interdependence. While the utilization of these learning tools in traditional school-based settings has not been widely accepted, the same is not completely true of nonformal adult learning environments. It is increasingly being suggested, and reflected in practice, that adults, who have distinct learning needs, may be well suited to learning through narrative and dialogue in nonformal settings.

What is certainly less clear, regardless of the setting, is how specifically narrative and dialogue, either separately or in combination, promote conceptual change and cognitive flexibility. Traditional theories, in some ways, seem to reduce experiences to simply occasions for the production of data to be compared with that already stored in our minds. However, theories, albeit promising, which suggest that experiences are psychologically demanding, dynamic, and capable of producing real-time change are largely untested and thus, as yet, largely unsupported. It would seem, as is the case in much of life, the reality may lie in the space between.

It is to this notion of space that much of this effort has either alluded or directly referred. How do we create and maintain spaces, intra- and interpersonal, where narrative and dialogue can inform who we understand ourselves to be and how we envision our place in the world? Further, what is the role for the numerous institutions we create and sustain, from schools to community settings, in this effort? What can be imagined, created, and accomplished in these spaces? Clearly our answers to these questions may hold the key to creating the kind of communities which nurture and inspire us and provide for a more peaceful and prosperous future.

References

- Abram, R. J. (2007). Kitchen conversations: Democracy in action at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. *Public Historian*, 29(1), 59-76.
- Aprill, A., & Townsell, R. (2007). The arts as an occasion for collective adult learning as authentic community development. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, 116, 51-63.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Austin, Texas: Texas University Press.
- Bauman, R., & Sawin, P. (1990). The politics of participation in folklife festivals. In I. Karp & S. D. Lavine (Eds.), *Exhibiting cultures: The poetics and politics of museum display* (pp. 288-314). Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Blair, I. V. (2002). The malleability of automatic stereotypes and prejudice. *Personality & Social Psychology Review*, 6(3), 242-261.
- Braid, D. (1996). Personal narrative and experiential meaning. *The Journal of American Folklife*, 109(431), 5-30.
- Bramadat, P. A. (2001). Shows, selves, and solidarity: Ethnic identity and cultural spectacles in Canada. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 33(3), 78-98.
- Bramadat, P. A. (2005). Toward a new politics of authenticity: Ethno-cultural representation in theory and practice. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 37(1), 1-20.
- Brookfield, S. (1985). Self-directed learning: A conceptual and methodological exploration. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 17(1), 19-32.

- Bruner, J. S. (1991). The narrative construction of reality. *Critical Inquiry*, 18(1), 1-21.
- Bruner, J. S. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cantwell, R. (1991). Conjuring culture: Ideology and magic in the Festival of American Folklife. *Journal of American Folklore*, 104(412), 148-163.
- Chinn, C. A., & Brewer, W. F. (1993). The role of anomalous data in knowledge acquisition: A theoretical framework and implications for science education. *Review of Educational Research*, 63, 1-49.
- Cruikshank, J. (1997). Negotiating with narrative. *American Anthropologist*, 99(1), 56-69.
- Dewey, J. (1916/1944). *Democracy and education*. New York: The Free Press.
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York: Perigee.
- Falk, J. H., & Dierking, L. D. (2000). *Learning from museums: Visitor experiences and the making of meaning*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Feldman, C. (2008). Carol Feldman Research. Retrieved April 5, 2008, from <http://www.psych.nyu.edu/feldman/index.html>
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Gadamer, H.G. (1975). *Truth and method*. New York: Continuum.
- Gibson, J. J. (1979). *The ecological approach to visual perception*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Gorksy, P., Caspi, A., & Tuvi-Arad, I. (2004). Use of instructional dialogue by university students in a distance education chemistry course. *Journal of Distance Education*, 19(1), 1-19.

- Greenhalgh, T., & Hurwitz, B. (1999). Narrative-based medicine: Why study narrative? *British Medical Journal*, 318, 48-50.
- Habermas, J. (1972). *Knowledge and human interests*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Harrison, J. (2005). What matters: Seeing the museum differently. *Museum Anthropology*, 28(2), 31-42.
- Hayes, S., & Yorks, L. (2007). Lesson from the lessons learned: Arts change the world when . . . *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 116, 89-98.
- Hicks, D. (1996). Contextual inquiries: A discourse-oriented study of classroom learning. In D. Hicks (Ed.), *Discourse, learning, and schooling* (pp. 104-141). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Higgins, E. T. (1992). Achieved "shared reality" in the communications game: A social action that creates meaning. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 11, 107-125.
- Jonassen, D. H. (2006). On the role of concepts in learning and instructional design. *Educational Technology, Research and Development*, 54(2), 177-196.
- Knowles, M. S. (1970). *The modern practice of adult education*. New York: Association Press.
- Krauss, R. M., & Fussell, S. R. (1996). Social psychological models of interpersonal communication. In E. T. Higgins & A. W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (pp. 655-701). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Kunda, Z. (1999). *Social cognition: Making sense of people*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Leung, A. K., Maddux, W. W., Galinsky, A. D., & Chiu, C. (2008). Multicultural experience enhances creativity: The when and how. *American Psychologist*, *63*(3), 169-181.
- Leung, K., & Bond, M. H. (2004). Social axioms: A model for social beliefs in multicultural perspective. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 36, pp. 122-199). San Diego, CA: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Mackeracher, D. (2004). *Making sense of adult learning* (2nd ed.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- McAdams, D. P., & Pals, J. L. (2006). A new big five: Fundamental principles for an integrative science of personality. *American Psychologist*, *61*(3), 204-217.
- McIntosh, P. (1990). *Interactive phases of curricular and personal re-vision with regard to race*. Wellesley, MA: Center for Research on Women.
- Murillo, E. G. (1997). Pedagogy of a Latin American festival. *Urban Review*, *29*(4), 263-281.
- Neuhauser, P. C. (1993). *Corporate legends and lore: The power of storytelling as a management tool*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Piaget, J., & Inhelder, B. (1969). *The psychology of the child*. New York: Basic Books.
- Puigvert, L., & Elboj, C. (2004). Interactions among 'other women': Creating personal and social meaning. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, *18*(3), 351-364.

- Puigvert, L., Sorde, T., & Soler, M. (2000). *La Tertulia: A dialogic model of adult basic education in the new information age*. Paper presented at the Adult Education Research Conference, Vancouver, British Columbia.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Roberts, L. C. (1997). *From knowledge to narrative: Educators and the changing museum*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.
- Rosch, E. (1978). Principles of categorization. In E. Rosch & B. B. Lloyd (Eds.), *Cognition and categorization* (pp. 27-48). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Rossiter, M. (1999). A narrative approach to development: Implications for adult development. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 50(1), 56-71.
- Rossiter, M. (2002). *Narrative and stories in adult teaching and learning*. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Career and Vocational Education.
- Rule, P. (2004). Dialogic spaces: Adult education projects and social engagement. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 23(4), 319-334.
- Shaughnessy, M. E. (2004). An interview with Deanna Kuhn. *Educational Psychology Review*, 16(3), 267-282.
- Smith, E. R., & Semin, G. R. (2004). Socially situated cognition: Cognition in its social context. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 36, pp. 53-117). San Diego, CA: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Smith, M. E. (2006). Beyond the curriculum: Fostering associational life in schools. In Z. Bekerman, N. C. Burbules & D. S. Keller (Eds.), *Learning in places: The informal education reader* (pp. 9-34). New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

- Spiro, R. J., & Jehng, J. (1990). Cognitive flexibility and hypertext: Theory and technology for the non-linear and multidimensional traversal of complex subject matter. In D. Nix & R. J. Spiro (Eds.), *Cognition, education, and multimedia* (pp. 163-206). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Tennant, M. (2006). *Psychology and adult learning* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Tough, A. (1993). Self-planned learning and major personal change. In R. Edwards, S. Sieminski & D. Zeldin (Eds.), *Adult learners, education and training: A reader* (pp. 31-42). London: Routledge.
- Vosniadou, S. (1994). Capturing and modeling the process of conceptual change. *Learning and Instruction, 4*(1), 45-70.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1934/1987). Thinking and speech. In R. W. Rieber & A. S. Carton (Eds.), *The collected works of L.S. Vygotsky, volume I: Problems of general psychology* (pp. 39-285). New York: Plenum.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wegerif, R. (2006). Dialogic education: What is it and why do we need it? *Education Review, 19*(2), 58-66.
- Ziegler, M. F., Paulus, T. M., & Woodside, M. (2006). "This course is helping us all arrive at new viewpoints, isn't it?" Making meaning through dialogue in a blended environment. *Journal of Transformative Education, 4*(4), 302-319.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in the role of museums and cultural festivals in adult learning. Once considered the keepers of physical and cultural history, there was only a limited concern for research regarding if and how adults learned from these settings. The conventional view held that museums provided knowledge, and it was an individual's prerogative whether to seek it out or not. The past few decades, however, have seen both a resurgence of interest in visiting museums and festivals and a more concerted effort to understand their value in a rapidly evolving society.

Research on adult learning at cultural festivals is scarce. The bulk of festival related research considers either the cultural conservation/presentation aspects of these events or, alternatively, tourism and economic development impacts. Few studies have considered festival audiences as active learners and participants in the festival production. One study of two Canadian festivals suggests that festivals are indeed places which can promote deeper engagements among diverse individuals (Bramadat, 2001, 2005). Bramadat suggests further that although many of these engagements are superficial, they are an improvement over silence. Robert Cantwell (1991) in his consideration of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival suggests,

It is magic, when the frightful and tangled forces that divide human beings suddenly vanish, effaced by the sheer power and excellence, the authenticity of performance on the one hand and by the willingness of visitors on the other hand

to recognize power and excellence as such, even if they are unacquainted with the cultural values that inform it. (p. 160)

Beyond this scant festival research, there does exist a growing body of knowledge regarding museum education in general. A recent review of museum-related research suggests that although we now consider museums and cultural sites as valuable settings for educational endeavors, methodologically-sound research efforts to understand their role, specifically with regard to adult learning, are still quite limited (Dudzinska-Przesmitzki & Grenier, 2008). While studies abound, they are primarily single case studies which are driven by fiscal, political, or administrative demands. Dudzinska-Przesmitzki and Grenier contend that these studies are neither theory driven nor are they theory producing. They do little by way of helping us understand the role of museums in the real lives of those who visit nor do they help museums maximize their potential in either reach or effectiveness. Further, the authors suggest that current museum research often does not consider theories of and research regarding adult learning, in general. This is particularly unproductive since museum education studies and adult learning research consider many parallel topics including motivation, the role of prior experience, and the need for relevancy.

One study worth noting, however, is a three-year qualitative study by Sachatello-Sawyer et al. (2002) in which the researcher and her associates interviewed over 500 museum educators, patrons, administrators, and others. What was overwhelmingly discovered through this effort is that not only are museums of all types offering adult education programs, but that those who visit museums actively seek them out. These

findings are clearly consistent with those of Falk and Dierking (2000) who suggest that one of the prime reasons that adults cite for museum visits is “to learn.”

Dudzinska-Przesmitzki and Grenier further suggests that the studies that do exist generally fall into one of two categories. Either they consider what the visitor contributes to his or her museum visit and thus learning or what the museum contributes to the experience. Falk and Dierking (2000) have proposed a more complete way of understanding the interplay between the visitor and the museum. The Contextual Model of Museum Learning, they propose, considers the many elements that affect the experience of the adult museum visitor. The model consists of three overlapping and interacting contexts: the personal, the sociocultural, and the physical. Each context is multifaceted and changing, and continually interacting with the others.

According to Falk and Dierking, the personal context consists of three distinct yet connected elements: (a) motivations for visiting, (b) prior knowledge, beliefs, and experiences, and (c) individual choice and control. Each of these personal factors contributes to an individual’s experience in the museum. With regard to motivation, a study by Falk (2008) suggests that there are several distinct reasons why people visit museums. Some individuals visit to explore a particular exhibit on view and to learn about its content. Others seek out the broad experience of the museum rather than any particular exhibit or content information. Still others may see their visit as an opportunity to be in a social setting and to satisfy social needs. The second element of the personal context suggests that each visitor brings with him or her a set of preconceptions, beliefs, a base of knowledge, and a lifetime of experiences through which museum visits are filtered. In essence, and as will be discussed further later in this paper, the visitor’s

narrative interacts with the museum or exhibit narrative. Finally, museums are largely free-choice activities where visitors have ultimate control over if and how they navigate the space.

Falk and Dierking's sociocultural context includes two major constructs. The first considers the visitor and his or her non-museum dependent sociocultural connections. These may include those who are in the visitor's company that day and may stretch as far as those who have influenced the ways in which the visitor learns, his or her epistemological definitions, and cultural and/or religious influences. The second of the sociocultural considerations is the visitor's contacts, if any, with museum and exhibit staff including docents, program guides, and security and administrative personnel. These contacts may range from empowering, informative, and inquiry-encouraging to authoritarian and limiting. The final of Falk and Dierking's contexts is the physical. This involves the museum's attempts at orientation and guidance, the content of the exhibit, program, and museum, and any efforts to extend the experience beyond the immediate visit. Program extensions might be as simple as the provision of a reading or resource list or might encourage follow up visits or other opportunities to engage the subject matter.

Lisa Roberts (1997) argues, through her consideration of numerous Smithsonian Institution exhibits, that in order to be relevant and effective in engaging the public, museums must abandon their claim as sole arbiters and providers of cultural history and knowledge. Rather, they must accept, embrace, and build upon the fact that when visitors walk through their doors they bring with them individual narratives through which they engage, consider, filter, inquire, accept, reject, among other reactions, museum narratives. Roberts acknowledges that considering visitor narratives as the primary building block of

exhibits and programming may be quite disquieting to curators and museum administrators, and may also heighten the risk that visitors will leave an exhibit armed with inaccurate or incomplete information. She suggests, however, that it is in the negotiation between these narratives that learning occurs and is available to inform the visitor's life after his or her visit. Roberts offers three metaphors through which museums can be considered. The first is the marketplace where people and ideas meet and can be shared, traded, and negotiated. The second is ritual or festival which considers the museum as the setting where cultural life is enacted, or re-enacted. This is most evident when museums are the sites of celebrations, commemorations, or other similar ceremonies. The last metaphor, which Roberts considers and somewhat rejects, is that of an amusement park, where visitors come for enjoyment somewhat devoid of enrichment.

At the heart of much of what the preceding authors suggest is the need to understand the interplay of contexts and narratives that can lead to adult learning. They further argue that research must produce theories which guide programming and museum activities. Garoian (2001) offers the lens of performance to understand museum experience. He suggests that there are five distinct and interacting types of performance that take place within the museum. These are (a) performance of perception, (b) performance of autobiography, (c) performance of interdisciplinarity, (d) performance of museum culture, and (e) performance of the institution. Visitors actively perform perception, Garoian suggests. In a very Deweyian sense, perception is not only a one-sided reception of stimuli but rather is action oriented with the visitor taking in information as well as processing it with energy directed outward toward the object of inquiry. It is this bidirectionality that ultimately will determine how perception is

performed at any given time. The performance of autobiography mirrors, in many ways, Roberts' notion of interacting narratives and Falk and Dierking's personal context. Visitors, particularly adults, bring into the museum, a lifetime of experiences, information, beliefs, and conceptions. It is to and through these autobiographies that exhibit and program content is directed. Further, visitors' museum experiences become part of their autobiographies, thus affecting their lives after their visits. The performance of interdisciplinarity happens when museums attempt to break down the categories that define particular cultural or physical phenomena and to represent these phenomena more complexly and holistically. The performance of museum culture suggests that museums and curators often have particular norms, customs, modes of communication, and practices which pervade their content distribution efforts. One need only think of the pervasiveness and consistency of museum object labeling practices or the hushed feeling inspired by the grandness of many museum structures. Finally, Garoian suggests that institutions are performed within the walls of a museum. This includes the fiscal, political, and administrative needs of the institution as well as the personnel roles and responsibilities that define it. Garoian suggests that while each of these performances is in some way present, to understand a visitor's experience, one must seek to uncover their interplay and influence.

While the work of Falk and Dierking, Roberts, and Garoian does provide us with a host of somewhat complementary theories with regard to adult learning in museums, these theories remain largely untested. Further, how these theories might pertain to cultural festivals has not yet been explored. Finally, research specifically focused on learning at cultural festivals is largely nonexistent. The purpose of the research described

below, then, is to gather information regarding visitor experiences at cultural festivals. The research will seek to understand these experiences both through the lens of museum learning theory and on their own terms, perhaps suggesting theory specific to cultural festivals.

This study attempts to understand the experiences of five individuals who visited the Bhutan program of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, which took place between June 26 and July 6 of 2008 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The Festival, which is conceptualized by organizers as a living museum, is an annual event that is free and open to the public. The specific research questions addressed in this study are (a) what are study participants' perceptions of their experiences during their festival visit? and (b) what do study participants perceive as outcomes of their visit?

Methodology

Conceptual Framework

Numerous philosophers, theorists, and researchers have advanced the notion that knowledge and knowing is constructed by learners as they attempt to make sense of and through their experiences (Dewey, 1916/1944; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Vygotsky, 1934/1987, 1978). This constructivist epistemology suggests that knowledge is constructed in active interaction and transaction with one's environment. Educational endeavors characteristic of constructivism emphasize inquiry, discovery, hands-on learning involving the manipulation of objects, and the posing of challenges to the student's conception of how the world works. It also suggests that the most effective learning happens when students are encouraged to pursue their own interests and meet their own needs. One variation of this epistemology is social constructivism, which

suggests that learning is an active social process that happens through the interaction of the learner with those around him or her. Most closely associated with Vygotsky, Bruner, and Bandura, social constructivists contend that reality is in large part constructed through human activity. Knowledge is also a human product, and is social and culturally created. Learning, it would follow, is also a social process in which the learner is involved in meaningful social exchanges and activities. This study utilizes social constructivist epistemology to understand how knowledge about others is learned.

The theoretical framework employed in this effort is phenomenology. Phenomenology, which is inherently interpretive, considers that experience and thus the phenomena involved in experience are best and most fully understood by those who are having the experience. According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenology concerns itself with “wholeness, examining entities from many sides, angles, and perspectives until a unified vision of the essences of a phenomenon or experience is achieved” (p. 58). Specifically, this study utilizes the Interpretive Phenomenology Approach (IPA) (Smith, 2004). This approach involves working with a small number of cases which are explored in depth. The approach is also inductive and interrogative, allowing for both flexibility and for greater participant input and insight. Since a primary purpose of this research is to understand participants’ experiences and perceptions, IPA is highly appropriate.

Questions about cognition and learning in educational psychology, however, are often addressed with quantitative methods, and researchers rely on constructs such as “understanding” to interpret their data. In a departure from that tradition, in this study I use IPA to capture the participants' direct experiences from their point of view. Their

representations of experiences are central, and my organization and analysis of their reports is secondary. My interpretation of this analysis is informed by theories, such as socially situated cognition, which can be viewed as combining emphases from different research traditions, most explicitly psychology and anthropology. This dual mission of understanding both experiences in their phenomenological sense and the resultant cognitive products of those experiences has resulted in the present study's blended approach to both data collection and analysis.

The particular methods used in the research as they correspond to the research questions are as follows:

Research Questions	Research Methods Employed
What are study participants' perceptions of their experiences during their festival visit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant interviews before and after festival visit. • Researcher observations of festival visitors.
What do study participants perceive as outcomes of their visit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant Interviews after festival visit.

Setting

The Smithsonian Folklife Festival (formerly the Festival of American Folklife), begun in 1967, heralds itself as a model of research-based presentation of contemporary living cultural traditions. According to its official website, the festival has “brought more than 16,000 musicians, artists, performers, craftspeople, workers, cooks, storytellers, and others to the National Mall to demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and aesthetics that embody the creative vitality of community-based traditions” and “has featured exemplary tradition bearers from 54 nations, every region of the United States, scores of ethnic

communities, more than 100 American Indian groups, and some 50 occupations” (“Smithsonian Folklife Festival,” 2006).

Each year the festival takes place over two weeks in June and July, centered around the celebration of American Independence Day, July 4th. Typically three programs or focus areas are presented. These programs may include individual countries, regions of the world, American states, or cultural thematic areas, such as basketmaking. In specially designated years festival format and duration can change. An example would be the 1976 edition of the festival. In commemoration of the bicentennial of the United States, the festival lasted three months, changing programs every two weeks.

Some have termed the site of the festival, the National Mall, as America’s town square. The expansive green park stretches from the Lincoln Memorial to the Capitol Building and is surrounded by numerous Smithsonian Museum buildings, national monuments, and commemorative sites. The National Park Service website (“National Mall and Memorial Parks,” 2008) offers the following description:

The open space and parklands envisioned by Pierre L'Enfant's plan, which was commissioned by George Washington, created an ideal stage for national expressions of remembrance, observance and protest. With everything from colossal monuments to commemorative gardens, from presidential inaugurations to civil rights protests the National Mall and Memorial Parks hosts history in the making. Numerous 1st Amendment demonstrations and special events are held in the park each year. The park continues to evolve as Americans seek new ways to recognize their heritage . . . The sites of National Mall & Memorial Parks are a testament to America's past and present where the values of our nation are

presented in a masterful blending of formal history and tradition and informal contemporary life.

This study utilized the festival program entitled *Bhutan: Land of the Thunder Dragon*. Bhutan is situated in the Eastern Himalayas, bordered by China and India. Highlighting many aspects of life and culture in Bhutan, the festival presented Bhutan's unique approach to modern life and development. This approach includes, as national policy, the pursuit of "Gross National Happiness." Bhutan's development policy cites a deep respect for and protection of its unique natural and cultural resources. The Bhutan program at the festival consisted of one large music and dance tent, one narrative stage, and one food demonstration stage (see Appendix A for Bhutan program participants, Appendix B for site map, and Appendix C for a sample daily schedule of events—all taken from official festival program). The narrative stage featured six to eight 45-minute panel programs per day on aspects of Bhutanese culture and life. These programs involved presentation, discussion amongst panel participants, and an opportunity for audience questions and comments. Further, over 20 individual exhibits representing life and art in Bhutan were available as was an archery court and a full size Bhutanese temple constructed on the Mall by Bhutanese craftsmen. The exhibit areas featured Bhutanese craftspeople, monks, and other native representatives demonstrating their particular skill or communicating about their area of expertise.

Participants

A primary research method employed in this study is the compilation of case studies of the experiences of five individuals visiting the Bhutan program of the 2008 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. As previously discussed, this small number of cases allows

for an ideographic treatment of the data, where a small number of case studies are chosen and each receives in-depth consideration and is presented in rich detail in research reports. Flyvbjerg (2004) suggests that a case study allows for the kind of depth which renders an experience alive and present in the research findings. Further, Flyvbjerg asserts,

The case story is itself the result. It is a “virtual reality,” so to speak. For the reader willing to enter this reality and explore it inside and out, the payback is meant to be a sensitivity to the issues at hand that cannot be obtained from theory.
(p. 430)

Given that my primary objective is a deeper understanding of particular phenomena and not the ability to generalize from my findings, this approach is appropriate. Yin (2003) suggests that case studies are particularly useful in understanding phenomena in their natural setting, where the boundaries between the phenomena and the setting are not always clear. I believe this also makes case studies an appropriate tool for investigating the festival experience.

I recruited participants through purposive sampling with a goal of identifying and recruiting individuals who had little knowledge of the culture (Bhutan) being exhibited but who had some knowledge of and interest in folklife festivals. Through personal and extended contacts (included folklorists and other professionals and acquaintances in the Washington D.C. area), a pool of potential participants were identified. Individuals of interest were contacted via telephone until five participants agreed to participate. See Appendix D for the script used to recruit participants. I then provided particular details and addressed questions regarding consent, participation, and request for permission to

publish. I also informed potential participants that they would receive a free one-year membership to the Smithsonian as compensation for their involvement.

Data Collection

I interviewed each participating individual prior to their visit to the festival. This 30-60 minute interview involved developing rapport between myself and the participant and learning about any prior experiences that the participant has had with the festival and with the subject of the festival program, Bhutan. I also asked participants about any expectations that they may have regarding their visit. I asked participants to visit the festival program on one occasion for as long as they wished, but encouraged them to spend at least two hours at the festival. The purpose for encouraging a minimum length of the visit was to replicate the average visit time for festival visitors as determined by previous festival surveys.

I asked participants to bring a digital camera with them on their visit (which I would provide, unless they would rather use their own) for the purpose of taking pictures of performances, exhibits, and scenes that they found interesting or intriguing. I further suggested that, at the time of taking a picture, the participants make a brief written note of why they took the picture and any accompanying thoughts. I explained that no permissions were required to take or use the photos, since there are no laws prohibiting the taking of photographs on public property. Further, there is no prohibition of including people in those photos since individuals in the public place do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy. I informed participants prior to their visit of when and where it was legal to take photos, with specific emphasis on prohibitions against taking photos which represent privacy intrusions, even in public spaces. Although participants retain

ownership of the images they took, I asked them via the informed consent form for permission to publish their photos in research materials. After their visit, I interviewed participants for approximately one to two hours and asked them to tell the story of their visit, using their photos (accessible via a portable computer) where applicable. I asked follow up questions for clarification and elaboration purposes.

While individual visitor experience interviews were the primary source of data for this study, an additional method was used. Through the course of the festival, I observed festival events and interactions and compiled field notes from these observations. The purpose of these observations was to gather data on how visitors interacted with festival exhibits and artists and on the kinds of dialogue and questioning they initiated.

The Narrative Approach and the Use of Photographs

The research utilized a narrative approach to interviewing. This approach allows participants to select those events and details which they see as important and meaningful to their experience. Riessman (2008) suggests that through narrative “particular histories of individuals are preserved, resulting in an accumulation of detail that is assembled into a ‘fuller’ picture of the individual or group.” Further, through narrative, the researcher focuses on “particular actors, in particular social places, at particular social times” (p.11).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) contend that narrative is a primary way of understanding reality. They suggest that “. . . life—as we come to it and as it comes to others—is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities” (p. 17). Narrative inquiry, then, according to Clandinin and Connelly is also a way of understanding experience. It is

. . . a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, stories of the experiences that make up people's lives, both individual and social. (p. 20)

The use of participant photo-documentation and photo-interviewing is gaining prominence within qualitative research practices. Specifically, in the picture-novella or Photovoice method, participants produce their own photos of people, places, and events. Individuals are then asked to show and talk about each photograph's significance and meaning. The dialogue evoked by the photographs represents data grounded in real experience and, for many researchers, renders the photographs infinitely more valuable than images created by outsiders (Hurworth, 2003).

Photo-elicitation, sometimes referred to photo-interviewing, while undoubtedly used throughout the history of visual research, has become significantly more widespread in the recent past. The method involves showing participants photos in an effort to evoke verbal responses. Photos used can be archival or contemporary, with much current research utilizing family photographs to gain access to cultural histories, events and rituals. Noted visual researcher John Collier recalls, from his experiences, that

Picture interviews were flooded with encyclopaedic community information whereas in the exclusively verbal interviews, communications difficulties and memory blocks inhibited the flow of information. (1979, p. 281)

Photo interviews have been used in a wide range of disciplines to study an equally wide range of topics. Some conclusions from studies of this methodology are that it enhances

memory retrieval, works especially well with younger participants, and opens up dialogue about difficult, abstract concepts (Hurworth, 2003).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

I assigned all participants pseudonyms of their own choosing and all interviews were transcribed. I catalogued participant photos as well. Photos were not analyzed directly and independently as a form of data, however. Data analysis involved an initial review of observation fieldnotes and interview transcripts. This allowed me to get a picture of the totality of the data available for analysis. After this initial consideration, I used an open coding technique to determine general themes and categories. With regard to the study participants, I considered each case as a distinct and separate entity when conducting initial data analysis. Riessman (2008) outlines the many ways that narrative can be analyzed. These include structural analysis which concerns ways in which things are said or not said, performance analysis which considers the co-construction of the narrative between researcher and participant, and thematic analysis which aims to discover what was said as opposed to how or why it was said. Riessman further suggests that thematic analysis, which was utilized in this study, allows for experience to be understood more naturally and more holistically.

After initial analysis, I compiled and investigated the data within categories looking for rationale to expand, collapse, combine, or otherwise alter the coding scheme. I then initiated another review of the data records to confirm and/or alter my theme selections. Throughout the process, I strove to be aware of and to memo about potential bias in determining these categories and in assigning data to them. Flyvbjerg (2004) suggests that a consistent criticism of case study research is that case conclusions reflect

significant researcher bias. He offers evidence, however, that suggests that it is often the case that analysis results in insights quite inconsistent with previous researcher hypotheses.

Once coding of the data was complete and all sources of data were considered on their own, I conducted cross source analysis looking for similarities and differences among the experiences of participants and researcher observations. I strove to be as descriptive as possible rather than looking for alternative explanations or rival theories.

Researcher Role

As the primary research instrument, there are numerous assumptions that any researcher must recognize in him- or herself at all stages of research, regardless of the nature of the inquiry. In fact, implicit in any research questions and procedures are assumptions that either consciously or unconsciously guide the inquiry. An example of this in the current research is in the definition of “interest” or “intrigue.” Participants in this study were asked to take pictures of scenes that interested and/or intrigued them. How interest and intrigue are defined and operationalized may differ significantly from person to person and from researcher to researched. Thus, I made a concerted effort to understand why the participant found the scene interesting or intriguing, rather than to use my own definitions and justifications. This, clearly, is only one example of an assumption that can affect the research process.

One ongoing strategy that I used was to write memos to help make my assumptions more visible. While this strategy did not eliminate these assumptions, it assisted in making me more conscious of both their existence and their potential impact on the research process. This strategy was also important since I have attended the

festival over the last few years and thus cannot be considered an outsider to the process. I have also had significant involvement in other festivals similar in focus, if not size, to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Further, my spouse of nearly four years has been involved in the Smithsonian Festival for over 30 years as a sound engineer. Finally, a few of the research participants are acquaintances and thus I must continually consider the impact of these relationships on my research work.

Trustworthiness

A key consideration in any research is validity. In qualitative research this consideration is often framed through the construct of trustworthiness. Why should participants in and consumers of one's research deem it worthy of their attention and serious consideration? This is particularly valid in qualitative research given that the only common element in all aspects of the research is the researcher. This creates a centralization of control of data gathering, analysis, presentation, and all other aspects of the research process. It is thus incumbent upon the researcher to assure the trustworthiness of the research effort. Planning for and establishing trustworthiness is paramount at all stages of the research process. In this effort, trustworthiness was accomplished by working to build rapport with participants, adequately recording and representing their experiences and insights, and being honest and reflective in the data analysis process. To achieve trustworthiness, I sought to allow participants to tell their stories in their own words, guarding against the urge to restate or reframe their observations and conclusions. Since the focus was on narrative data and an individual's understanding of his or her own situation, there was a lessened need to establish any absolute objective validity of the data, thus a lessened need for strategies such as

triangulation. The main concern was to make every attempt to background information that did not represent the individual's perceptions and insights. Another way that this was done was through the process of member checking. By returning to my case study participants and dialoguing with them regarding my analysis and conclusions, I allowed for clarification and redirection, if needed. Inherent, however, in the member checking process is the "risk" that participants may decide that they don't agree with classifications and conclusions and do not wish to have them presented. Maintaining trust and encouraging dialogue and clarification throughout the process renders this final member checking less of an all or nothing endeavor.

An alternative and fruitful way to address a concern for trustworthiness is the recognition that any attempt to study the social world is inherently partial. Offering the image of a crystal, Richardson (2000), amongst others, suggests that much like a crystal, the image that is obtained from peering through data is largely dependent on the angle of approach. Richardson offers that the crystal "combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, and alter, but are not amorphous" (p.934). Based on this conceptualization of the research process, Richardson uses a variety of criteria by which to evaluate social research include the contribution it makes to understanding, its reflexivity and its expression of reality. It is hopeful that the study described below has allowed for a more complete, although still very partial, picture of how folklife festivals might serve as nonformal settings for intercultural learning.

The Participants

Each of the five participants in this study was interviewed prior to their visit to the

Festival. All were asked to tell about themselves, their travel experiences, any prior Smithsonian Folklife Festival visits, their approach to learning about new cultures, and their expectations for their upcoming festival visit.

Art

Art is an architect in his mid-forties who resides in Philadelphia, PA. He cites travel as his latest “gig.” He began traveling internationally five years ago and feels that the more he travels “the bigger the world seems, instead of smaller.” When he travels, he visits museums but would much prefer to explore on his own. When probed about the difference between museums and exploring on his own, he replies,

The museum to me is like an indoor climate-controlled space with artifacts and a site is generally the building or the structure or the ruin that once housed the artifacts. I will say it’s funny because I went to Ephesus in Turkey and walked the whole site and just loved it, and now there’s an Ephesus museum—I think in Germany—and that was much more exciting because I could connect the artifacts with the Roman City. So that was kind of cool but otherwise it’s just sort of like—I live in Philadelphia and even when I go to the art museum on Sunday’s, maybe like four times a year, the first thing I do is head straight for the reconstructed temple or that kind of thing. Maybe it’s because I’m into buildings.

To learn about an unfamiliar culture, Art consults travel magazines and the internet.

Art has visited the Smithsonian Folklife Festival once and has attended several smaller folklife festivals. When asked if he had any goals for his visit to the Bhutan area, Art says, “Just to learn more about what it’s all about because you hear things, like it’s this country where everybody is supposed to be happy. Just sounds like a pretty unique

place.” Art is somewhat familiar with Bhutan and its reputation as a somewhat closed, unspoiled society.

Tasker

Tasker is a 30-year-old woman who has lived in a suburb of Washington, D.C. for the previous four years. She is originally from Philadelphia. At present, she is attempting to gain entry into a Masters Program in Art Therapy. She holds an undergraduate degree in Sociology. She has traveled several times per year in the recent past; however, most of her travel has been domestic. Her furthest travel, and her most memorable, was a visit to Israel. She loves to travel and says that “it is my favorite thing to do. I love experiencing new things. I love how it makes me feel uncomfortable.” When traveling, Tasker tries to go to a place for long enough to really experience the culture. She often rents an apartment for a few weeks and attempts to live as a local, even shopping at local grocery stores.

Tasker has been to four previous Smithsonian Folklife Festivals, however she indicates that she has only ever been to night concerts and has never visited the cultural exhibit areas. She sees her visits as more socially-oriented than educationally-focused. Tasker knows little to nothing about Bhutan. When asked how she might find out information about a country or culture she was unfamiliar with, she indicates that she would use the internet. If she had extensive resources and she felt it were safe, she would travel to the country to see “what their day-to-day existence is like.”

Tasker’s expectations about her upcoming visit were simply “to know a little bit more.” When probed as to what might particularly intrigue her, if anything, she offers,

I've always been interested in food. I'm always like, "what's the food like?" I like food. I really do. I love to eat. I do. I mean that's like one of my favorite—like the way I travel when I'm at home is to go to different restaurants and try to sample some of the food.

Brian

Brian is a 36-year-old man who resides in Massachusetts. He is employed by the State of Massachusetts and works in a managerial capacity on health care policy and finance. Brian travels two or three times per year, mostly within the United States. He has, however, been to Europe twice. When traveling, he "gravitates toward cities—not so much resorts or anything like that." He enjoys visiting museums and historic sites during the day and going to restaurants and bars at night. Brian's most memorable travel experience was to France where he recalls being "very moved by Normandy. I never really understood the extent of what D-Day was until I went there and saw how immense the area was."

Brian has never been to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival but has been to a few other folklife festivals that are shorter in duration and held in city centers. At these festivals, Brian recalls experiencing the music and the food, indicating that he rarely visits the cultural exhibits, citing the crowds around cultural exhibits as a major disincentive for him. When asked what he hopes to get from visiting a cultural folklife festival, Brian offers,

I never really perceived festivals as a learning experience. I usually just want to enjoy the music. Occasionally I'll find some music that I probably would

otherwise not have listened to had I not been at the festival. So I guess the new experiences.

Brian's knowledge of Bhutan is limited to its Far East location and its characterization as a Buddhist country. When interested in learning about an unfamiliar culture, Brian accesses internet resources or buys a book. If circumstances allowed, he would consider a visit. When asked about his expectations for his visit, Brian replied,

I'm actually looking forward to it. Because I feel like it's—like I said earlier, I never really go to the cultural exhibits and this is something that I'm going to do and I think it will be very interesting. I expect there will be a lot of people and I might be overwhelmed and I might end up going through it very quickly.

Julie

Julie is a 21-year old woman who lives and goes to school in Atlanta, Georgia. She is pursuing an undergraduate degree in philosophy from a private four-year university. Although she has only been traveling for two years, she has visited sites in both Eastern and Western Europe. She cites looking at architecture and sampling food as her primary activities when visiting a country other than her own. She says,

I spend a lot of time trying to learn the history of the architecture and trying to find different kinds of authentic foods and also just trying to converse with the people there. Find out what their day-to-day life is like.

As with Tasker and Brian, Julie cites the internet as her preferred way of searching out information about an unfamiliar culture. With adequate resources and with safety not at issue, however, she indicates that she would visit the country. She offers, "I guess I think to really learn about a culture you have to have culture shock." She defines

culture shock as “something so different and so strange that you’re scared to death for a least a period of time.”

Julie has not attended any folklife festivals, despite the fact that she enjoys folk music. She suggests this is because she is “lazy about trying to find out new things.”

When asked about her expectations for her visit, she offers the following:

Well I hope to definitely learn about the culture. I’d like to learn about day-to-day life. Would be really interesting just how people make their livings, what kind of houses they live in, what kind of food they eat, what their relationships are like. Like are women as important as men in the country or what’s the role of children and some minorities in the country, would be interesting to learn about. Political system. I’m still pretty sheltered, so it will be an interesting experience.

Hank

Hank is a 24 year old man who is also a student in and a resident of Atlanta, Georgia. He has lived in Atlanta, Georgia for five years, although he still considers northern California his home. He has not traveled extensively, but has visited a few other states in the United States and one foreign country, which he does not define as real traveling. When probed about what constitutes real traveling, Hank says,

I guess just not being able to communicate with people. Or just being too nervous to and I’m not sure what makes you too nervous. Obviously there’s language but I can imagine going to like a European country and still being nervous.

When traveling, Hank enjoys visiting historic sites because he says “it brings to life subjects studied in school.”

When asked how he would become acquainted with an unknown culture, Hank also says he would use the internet as well as books and encyclopedias. Given the resources, Hank would want to go and to live in the country of interest. When asked why, he offers,

Well, you're forced to communicate and interact with people from that culture and you're surrounded by it. It's not like you can just crawl back into your own culture if you feel nervous or insecure. I think it would be fun.

Hank has visited the Smithsonian Folklife Festival once and a smaller folklife festival once as well. He recalls enjoying the music and just "generally looking around."

Visiting the Smithsonian Folklife Festival

The individual visit narratives of study participants, offered verbally and through select photographs, are varied, interesting, and rich in detail. They are, however, not offered in their entirety herein. To accomplish the goals of this study and to address its research questions more specifically, the experiences of the individual participants are shared through their words (in some cases accompanied by corresponding photographs) as they reflect a number of recurrent visit experience themes, some focusing on the individual and others more social in nature. In some instances, data from researcher observations is also included to further illustrate visit experience themes. These themes are the result of the data coding and analysis process outlined in the previous section entitled "Methodology." While these themes are certainly overlapping and interacting, they are presented, at least initially, as somewhat separate entities for illustration purposes. Links between them are more fully explored in the discussion section below.

Relevant to the first of this study's research questions regarding participants'

perceptions of their visit experiences, three major themes emerged and are detailed below. The first two of these involve processes that are primarily psychological or individual in nature. The first theme is the activation of multiple senses in festival perceptions (discussed below under the heading *A Feast for the Senses*). The second theme reflects the application of one's personal characteristics and history to both their visit behavior and attempts to make meaning from experience (under the heading *Every Person Has a Story*). A brief case study, focusing on the making of a mandala, is also offered to illustrate these themes. The third of the themes addressing participants' perceptions is more social in nature and is, in itself, multi-faceted. It involves, and is discussed under the heading of *The Role of Other People*. Specifically, participants recalled their interactions with and perceptions of official Bhutanese demonstrators/presenters, fellow visitors, and the voice of the museum through interpretive signage. This more socially-oriented theme is also explored through a brief consideration of visits to the Buddhist temple, a major feature of the Bhutan program. The second of this study's research questions involves the participants' perceptions of the outcomes of their festival visit. Study participants' perceptions are detailed below under the headings of *Assessing the Experience* and *A Missing Link*.

A Feast for the Senses

Throughout the retelling of their experiences, study participants recalled their rich sensory perceptions. Beyond just seeing and hearing, participants noted how their senses of smell, touch, and taste were activated by elements of the Bhutan program. Art comments,

I was amazed at the color that these people use. So this is the window of the

temple and the musicians are on the other side, perforated curtains so that the breeze flows through. So it was a neat effect because they were playing music and the curtains flowing behind them and there was incense you know, so it was cool. This [Figure 1] is—nothing really told me what this was, but it's some sort of a chimney and they were burning pine branches, but the cool thing about it was the whole air smelled like pine and it really kind of put you in the place because there's this smell kind of drifting through the air, the prayer flags are in the background, some people are kind of walking around in costume and it was cool because it got all your senses going.



Figure 1. Art's photograph of the incense burner outside of the Bhutanese temple.

At a later point in the interview, Art added, "it's like every surface had some kind of a color to it. Very vibrant and it all worked somehow because it was like this whole continuous thing of color, which was neat."

When talking about the music and dance performances, Hank recalls,

It just starts with—I'm not sure, they're not really cymbals but one guy doing that and then one dancer comes up on stage and it slowly, slowly builds and then pretty soon you have like eight people on the platform dancing around, and they're moving as a group as if the drummers are attacking the dancers and they're moving all around the stage, so you hear the drums go away and come back and just kind of undulates. And then finally—they kept herding the individual dancers off the stage, like symbolizing defeating evil spirits. It was just really relaxing. Like you just kind of absorb it all at once as opposed to focusing on any one feature, especially the noise coming and going.

Also referring to a music and dance performance, pictured in Figure 2, Tasker says,

I actually don't really know that much about what they were doing. I was just totally interested in watching. Well, actually what they were dancing to was just clapping together of, like, cymbals or something like a cymbal which actually I found really irritating. But there was no music. It was just like, I guess, some kind of a percussion but it wasn't like anything that I felt like I was enjoying. So I'm sure if it's supposed to be some kind of solemn dance they like totally got it down. But I loved the costumes. I loved the way the costumes moved when they danced. What's so interesting is they weren't actually so graceful and in the photos they just look so graceful to me, which I love.

While some experiences involved a number of senses, others recount more specific sensory perceptions. When talking about her visit to the Bhutanese temple, Tasker offers,



Figure 2. Tasker's photo of Bhutanese dance.

Oh, that was the other thing I was thinking. Yeah, totally. I was thinking that it was too bad—I don't know if it was at this point that I was thinking about—yeah, I think it was because it was the smell of it. That was one primary memory I had is oh my God, it smells like so good in here. It is that it was a shame that I'm only documenting this experience with my camera. That's what I felt because I was like, oh there's so much to take in. It smelled good.

As Tasker continued reviewing photographs and recalling memories, she offers, "I love the colors. Again, the colors. I just love the colors." Hank's visit was also told using multiple references to his sensory impressions.

The music, the incense, looking around. I mean there's a hundred different things to look at. . . . We got distracted by what we thought was music and it was. We went to the tent where the dancing was and that was fucking cool.

When asked if he touched anything, Hank replied, "some of the stone work just to feel how deep the stone was cut. Like they had earth made bricks and I just wanted to see how strong, you know." Art also seemed to appreciate the opportunity to touch exhibited

objects.

You're just kind of free to experience it. If you want to feel how it feels or how heavy it is or something about that connection. Maybe the physical connection that you don't get just sort of seeing it behind glass or something, especially because so much work went into these carvings and I'm thinking specifically of wood like those incredible carvings like that. Just that extra connection, I think.

Others cited the intricacy of the carvings displayed at the festival. When speaking about two particular images (Figure 3 & 4), Hank says,

But again, all the colors and the details. Like the scales on the dragon, the stuff coming off of it, like it's all layered. I don't know what the words are because I don't do any of this stuff but it seems like it would be very difficult to carve all that out and then paint it and there's just little intricacies that you kind of notice. And I know this was just built for the mall so I wonder, you know, how long it would have even taken, you know.



Figure 3. Hank's photograph of the temple detail.



Figure 4. Hank's photograph of detail on outside temple wall.

Brian also was impressed by the intricacy of the temple carvings.

So this is the close up, obviously, of the Bhutanese temple. I was really intrigued by all the sort of intricate carving that they did for the purpose of just this festival and it just seemed very painstaking to me. I would never have the patience to do that. That was something that struck me throughout the other exhibits was that a lot of their artisanry is very deliberate and very painstaking. So that kind of struck me which would require a tremendous amount of patience, so I was just struck by that and that's—I don't know what the symbol of that was, but—and that's a dragon, again. It's just a close up and I thought it was very interesting with intricate stuff.

All of the study participants took time in their visit to visit the Bhutanese food tent to sample traditional Bhutanese dishes. While none commented specifically on the taste, it seemed clear that the purpose of their sampling was beyond the mere satisfaction

of their bodily needs. Each told me of their food choice and when and where they consumed it.

Of all the study participants, sensory perceptions were most absent from Julie's visit narrative. While it cannot be assumed that she was unaware of festival smells and sounds, it suggests that these recollections were not central to her experience.

The rich recalling of the study participants' sensory perceptions suggests that, as Garoian postulates, perception is in many ways performed. It is the active taking in and experiencing of any given moment, which can propel action as in the case of the music moving Hank to visit another festival area.

Every Person Has a Story

Falk and Dierking, Garoian, and Roberts all suggest that a museum visitor's narrative is highly relevant to his or her visit experience. As discussed more extensively earlier, that narrative might include a person's prior and current knowledge, beliefs, and experiences as well as their personal tastes and habits. To understand a visitor's experience, then, it is useful to consider these personal factors. This appears to be no less true when considering a festival visit or visitor. For this study's participants, personal narratives seemed to influence styles of interaction, choices of activities, and ways of interpreting information. These recollections speak directly to this study's first research question which addresses participants' perceptions of their visit experiences.

Each participant spoke of his or her style of interaction. Julie said, "I am pretty nervous about going up to people and just asking questions even though people were going up to the monks. I didn't feel comfortable doing that." When speaking of a

particular narrative session, Hank admitted, “I did have a question I wanted to ask but I always find myself, in those situations, really nervous.” Brian offered,

I think part of it is my shyness because it’s difficult for me to actually talk to people and say, so, how do you feel about this or what’s that like and so having a formal presentation where someone gets up and says, this is the way it is, is good and why I like factual things.

Similarly, Tasker commented on interaction in this way:

It’s not really what I normally do. Partially it’s because my style is taking it all in. It’s interesting to say that on the heels of what I just said about it being an interactive festival. Although I do listen to other people’s questions and I pick up on what they’re saying but I almost never ask questions like that.

Art, while initially reluctant to ask questions or engage demonstrators in conversation, did eventually interact. About that, Art says,

Yeah, not initially, but once I really got into it. Like initially I was just kind of on guard. I think just because we are—and I think it took me a while to realize that that’s what they’re here for. A classic example is like inside the temple, once I took a few pictures and nobody grabbed my camera, I kind of started talking.

Participants readily offered examples from their visits that in some way connected to their current lives or past history. The following are some of these examples.

Julie: This is exactly what I’ve been studying—cyclical patterns of destructive periods in history.

Brian: I was really fascinated by these because they were the—they’re prayer flags and the little description said that the theory behind them is that there are

prayers on them and by putting them there it's like going into the wind and it reminded me of being raised Catholic. You know, the whole incense thing where your prayers are going up, the symbolism of incense and so I'm like that's interesting, that a whole different culture has sort of the same kind of basic concept or theory of prayers going into the wind

Brian: I've always liked flags. I think flags are cool. I just like the aesthetics of the way they fly and all of that and then the whole concept of—oh, I guess it's not two different directions, well, it is—like the Eastern and the Western.

Brian: I did an undergraduate degree in political science. I'm really interested in just the mechanics of how this government works.

Art: Yeah, but this is cool and this is kind of neat because in Jordan two weeks ago we had tea in a tent made from goat hair and I was telling everybody at work about it, but they couldn't figure out why you need a tent from goat hair. Well, here it's the same idea except they use llama fur.

Tasker: And this was the thing about the home altars. If I'm remembering correctly, the reason I took a picture of it is because it talked about how like most people have home altars and I was thinking about how in this country when people have any sort of extravagant religious-like worship place in their home, they're sort of seen as freaks. That's kind of what I was thinking about it. So I was just kind of comparing it to our world, because there's one primary religion there so it's just really interesting what happens when everybody is sort of on the same page. Not that I would trade the melting pot for anything but it was just really interesting.

Tasker: It was really cool. I happen to love buckwheat noodles. These ones look like they might be a little different from the ones I've had because I think they have bigger pieces of buckwheat in them. I didn't see the flour when it started so I don't know how coarse it was. But when the noodles do come out, I think I have a picture. So those are the noodles and they just look like they're a little grittier than the ones I've had but I like the grit. They're so good.

Tasker: I mentioned I had a degree in sociology. I was a double major and the other one is in gender studies. So I was also really interested in like men's roles, women's roles. And in some cases it was like the really important crafts, quote-unquote, like the ones that have to do with religion and stuff like that tend to be done by the men and things like cooking done by women, which is not unusual. But this is one place where I saw—I don't know if there's a difference in what they're doing, but they were sitting right next to each other at the same exhibit so I'm not really sure what the difference is but I thought it was interesting.

Participants also used their own experiences, beliefs and knowledge to suggest how what they saw and heard differed from their lives and expectations. In discussing Bhutan's policy of Gross National Happiness, Julie commented,

This [Figure 5] is the wheel of happiness which—isn't that how they measure the gross national happiness? It's pretty neat. It's just such a radical concept. It seems a little too good to be true. It's very fascinating to meet people who actually believe that. I had no idea that it was a government-mandated thing and a government philosophy. I just figured it was more religious or spiritual, so that was a shock.



Figure 5. Julie’s photograph of the Wheel of Happiness.

In Hank’s discussion of his visit to a craft tent, he commented, “Well, that bamboo is woven in. It just looks very natural like you’re not disturbing the environment around you too much. I mean it’s just all natural. Nothing like you would see in the States anyway.” Brian expressed significant surprise on two major discoveries: the first that Bhutanese stamps have featured Western icons like Mickey Mouse and Elvis and the second that archery is a major sport in Bhutan.

Yeah, so it’s like they’ve also celebrated many non-Bhutanese accomplishments and icons including the US space program, American art and museums, even some Disney characters. My first experience of it was the Buddhist temple and so I have this association that it’s this sort of faraway place and they wouldn’t have TV’s and the same kind of—so I thought it would be a very isolated place and so the fact that they would have a Mickey Mouse stamp, I mean, huh? . . .

No, I just think it would be really interesting to see and I was curious about like what if any—how is archery a big sport? Because like archery is not a big sport

in the United States, at least where I'm from. . . .Because when you're in the Buddhist temple it's all peace, love, and this is we're all one community and then there is this competition thing, which I mean, it's a human, natural thing. So it's just funny because my initial perception started with the Buddhist temple. So it was like, this culture is really different than ours in the sense of they have different values, which is true, but I mean, there are still some very basic tendencies that fall through with competition. People are just naturally competitive.

Tasker, when describing her experience at an artisan tent makes a direct comparison to her impression of how things are done in her home country.

Everything is handcrafted and it's just—I mean it's like the ancient art of this and that but it's not like, in this country if you're going to find someone who is making a sword like this, it's probably been passed down but like they're the only one they know who does it anymore because in a factory you can get—we have a capitalist economy.

She concluded, “It just was like, huh, wow, that's how the rest of the world does it. Like wow.”

Perception and Autobiography: The Making of a Mandala

Participant recollections of and researcher observations from one demonstration tent in the Bhutan section of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival seem to illustrate the two psychological processes described by festival participants above--that of perception and the use of autobiography in information gathering and processing. The demonstration was of the creation of a limestone mandala painting, presented under the umbrella of

Bhutanese monastic arts. A mandala (which means circle, completion, and essence in Sanskrit) is a centuries-old Buddhist tradition and is meant to represent the impermanence of earthly existence. The master artist working on the mandala at the Festival was Nangay Wangchuk from the Punakha district of Bhutan, who like other mandala artists, is a monk specifically selected and trained over many years for his role. The mandala is created by first drawing out a pattern and then filling in that pattern using tiny pieces of sand or limestone placed by hand, beginning at the center and working outward (see Figures 6 through 9). At the festival, the monk making the mandala was joined by an interpreter who spoke to and answered questions for visitors as the mandala was being created.

While not all of this study's participants recounted seeing the mandala being made, both Hank and Art recalled their experiences. Hank spoke of his impressions in this way:

That it's all sand and they have all those different colors and tiny little objects, all the intricacy and I have no clue how long that would have taken. Also I liked how it was half done so you could see the pattern drawn down afterwards and you could kind of get a sense of how people actually do it because it is very complicated looking.

Art commented, referring to a picture he had taken,

This is a guy doing sand art using their traditional color wheel and this was cool because of the incredible detail. As a matter of fact, as I walked through the whole festival, these people are—they may be happy, but they're intense. It's amazing.

Just this little piece here took like 40 hours or something already and he hopes to have it done by the end of the festival.



Figure 6. Researcher produced photo of mandala maker beginning his creation. In background, festival visitor questions interpreter.



Figure 7. Researcher produced close up photograph of mandala creation.



Figure 8. Researcher produced photograph of visitors observing the making of the mandala.



Figure 9. Researcher produced photo of substantially completed mandala.

I observed visitor reaction to the mandala and its creation over the course of the festival. While much of the reaction centered around the beauty and the intricacy of the

work, there was also a significant focus on both the purpose of the mandala and questions of its preservation. Below is a brief exchange between a woman and the interpreter:

Woman: How long will it take to finish?

Interpreter: It will be finished by the end of the festival.

Woman: But doesn't it blow away?

Interpreter: Yes

Woman: Well, do you put something over it to keep it.

Interpreter: No. It's not meant to stay.

Following this interaction, jaws dropped and the assembled crowd buzzed. A woman was overhead querying another as to why someone would work so long on something and not preserve it. A man attempted to clarify for a youngster this notion of impermanence. I observed this type of exchange several times each day of the festival. The interpreter explained that the making of the mandala is what is important. It is a meditation for the monk to make and for the assembled crowd to see it made. He explained that after it was completed, all of the limestone would be gathered into the middle of the canvas, put in a jar, and returned to the river, to its maker, signaling both the impermanence of earthly possessions and pursuits and the need to return to the earth what is taken from it. He further explained that while this mandala was being made outside, mandala creation is traditionally done in monasteries by single monks and normally take about four days to complete. At this point, a visitor compared the effort to that of Native American sand painting in the Southeastern United States.

The above observations seem to support the contention that it is both perception and autobiography at play in visitors' reactions. Clearly, visitors seemed to recognize the

beauty and the artistry of the piece as well as the skill required to create it. They also seemed, however, to be, at least initially, inclined to understand the to-be-completed piece as the object of the exercise and as an item to be preserved, as is more typically the case in Western art creation.

The Role of Other People

The third theme uncovered in participants' narratives involved the role of other people—specifically, official festival participants from Bhutan, other festival visitors, and the voice of the program organizers through interpretive signage. Participant observations of and interactions with others indicate that a number of social processes were also enacted through the festival visit.

Official festival demonstrators/presenters from Bhutan.

Study participants differed in what parts of the Bhutan program they most accessed and seemed to value. Hank, Julie, and Brian favored the narrative stage programs (although not exclusively) which consisted of more formal panel presentations with Bhutanese scholars, artists, and tradespeople, followed by question and answer sessions. Brian offered, "I would say I enjoyed the narrative part the most. The whole thing about you get a lot of information, you're hearing them speak." Art and Tasker gravitated more to the experiential parts of the festival program. Tasker spoke extensively of her experiences.

I spent a lot of time looking at the art stuff and I was really struck by how, like, there were people there actually weaving or whatever as opposed to—you know, you go to a regular museum, even a really great museum like the Smithsonian museum, and there are photos of people weaving or maybe there's like a statue of

somebody weaving but you rarely see a live exhibit. And it's like so cool. I like to be able to talk to the people who were doing what they were doing and there were like people stationed along the way to answer questions if they didn't speak English, so I just felt like it was really interactive which definitely pulls me in better than a museum does.

Tasker added,

You know, there's something about like observing what somebody's doing—I don't know, maybe if you happen to know a little bit about weaving or whatever and then you can watch, “oh look how they're doing that, that's so cool” and look at that pattern, and you don't need to read about it as much because it's happening in front of you. Although I would say that I looked around for the signs to read more about what I was seeing and sometimes they were like right there and readily available and other times I felt like I really had to look for them. But I still really love the experiential nature of it. It's really great.

Art commented on how one particular craftsman added to his experience:

This is a detail at the entrance to the temple. And again, showing the colors. What was neat about this picture was—I didn't realize it, but I took it—later I went over to the crafts area and there was a guy with the tools that they use to make this. I remembered exactly what was for what and he kind of told me which tools they used and stuff like that.

More than simply the presence of the Bhutanese participants themselves, study participants seemed to appreciate what the participants were doing—the dynamic nature of the presentations. In particular, they valued that the participants were showing steps in

their artistic, athletic, or trade practice. Brian photographed and recounted each step in the archery contest including the behavior of the winners, pictured in Figure 10.

This is what was probably the most interesting thing of the whole festival to me. The whole presentation is that—so this team won here and they're really, really excited. So this guy is like jumping up and down and he's like running and then at the end of it—so they're all running around, all excited, and then they do this dance. So and they dance and they're real excited and—because if you look at these pictures, they're very sort of focused and very calm and when you watch them on the field, they look very calm and nice and relaxed and then all of a sudden they burst into joy and they're very excited and it was very—it's no—in a sense, no different than most celebration for any sport—is that you—it's like the dance in the end zone.



Figure 10. Brian's photograph of the winners dance following archery competition.

Hank also seemed to appreciate the showing of process. Below, he discusses the making of a large scale painting of the Buddha:

But I took the picture because they had these set out in order where it was like a blank sheet and then grid and then a little bit of design and so on and so on—each in a different stage. And I took that one because it kind of showed a little bit of everything right before it was painted. So it's just kind of interesting to see how things are actually put together.

Also commenting on his experience in the painting tent using photos to illustrate, Art adds,

Again, just neat how they show you the process. They had these panels set up for these paintings of Buddha and just the step-by-step process that they use to create Buddha's face and paint it. So starting with like the squares and kind of starting to fill in the shape of the face in proportion and all this—so the end result is like this and the next step is they go or they paint it

Art further comments on his visit to the architecture tent.

This was in the architecture tent and showing how it all goes together. Like carving the individual pieces and how it all snaps together without nails because they like interlock all of these pieces. It's kind of cool because at the temple, it's all like painted and you just don't know how they ever did that and now it makes it look simple or simplifies the process. This is also the guy that had all the tools that they used to make the temple, so he was pretty neat. Uhm—making mud bricks and neat because it's made on site.

Given her specific interest in art, Tasker seemed especially taken with the artistic processes being demonstrated.

And then this was the clay sculpture guy. This is really cool, too. This is just like the traditional clay sculpture and they're hollow and he was explaining how they put—it was prayers, they put valuables or prayers or something in the bottom and they seal it up like forever. But what was really cool—because I'm a potter so I was real interested in the process. I don't think I got—yeah I didn't get it—but they brought the clay from Bhutan and they mash up the clay and they add—they mix it with paper, like handmade paper shreds but then they don't bake it so the sculpture maintains its integrity because the paper helps make it stronger. And these are sacred, sort of, like almost idols, I guess. It's really interesting and they're fantastic works of art and this guy was sitting here doing it.

When asked why many of her photos are of hands (see Figures 11 and 12) creating art, she comments,

I try to zoom in on their process. It's less about like a fascination with hands per se and more about, like what are those hands doing exactly because I can't quite tell. Like, I don't really know how to weave. So I was trying to figure out. I felt like I was learning how to weave even though it's like—it's not like we don't have weaving in our culture, it's just I didn't really feel like I knew how to do it. So watching her do it. I was like oh, neat.

Commenting on a cooking demonstrates, Tasker explains,

So this guy is going to explain how they make buckwheat noodles. So they put the dough in this little thing and then they put the other end of the press on, and somebody sits on the lever and the noodles squeeze out. Look at that [Figure 13]. So they talked about how--like to be a good size woman in Bhutan is like so not

an insult. I don't think it has all to do with the noodles but it does help to have a little weight on you.



Figure 11. Tasker's picture of the weaving process.



Figure 12. Tasker's close up photograph of a basket weaver.

Tasker also expressed some disappointment when she visited a few tents where the craftsperson was not present or was present, but not in active demonstration.

And then here we have the potter which unfortunately she wasn't actually throwing anything because I'm a potter also I was especially interested.



Figure 13. Tasker's photograph of the making of buckwheat noodles.

Fellow visitors.

While occasionally fellow visitors were seen as hindrances in the form of what Hank calls a “crowd dynamic you have to work around,” there were numerous occasions in which other fellow visitors were seen as resources to the study participants. Hank suggests of his experience in the narrative tent that he was “usually just happy with listening to what other people ask because sometimes it kind of gets at what I'm curious about.” He further adds commenting on a visit to the woodworking tent, “I was lucky because right when I walked up somebody had just asked how it works so she was explaining how it turns back and forth. It doesn't just go in circles, so you have to turn the bowl.” Hank further added, when probed about the value of other people's questions, “certainly because it's not like they're going to provide an answer you can't use in one way or another. It's going to shed some light on something even if you weren't thinking about it at the time. Absolutely.”

Art commented on both the disposition of and his interactions with other visitors. Just everybody seemed to be really into it. Not only the demonstrators, but just people in the audience. They just started talking about something that we're watching. Just general public. Yeah, someone would say like, oh, my gosh, that's amazing.

When asked what he talked about with other visitors, Art replied, "What we were seeing, especially at the incense tent because we would pick it up, "oh, this is cedar and this is cardamom" and we'd be passing them back and forth."

Tasker was cognizant of and impressed with the diversity of people who came to the festival.

So this is the temple. And I guess I was at the end of the line and it wrapped around and I think at the moment I was just like—because I had to walk through—I walked down the line to get to the back and there were so many different kinds of people there. You can't see it at all in the picture but I was really struck by how many different kinds of people are coming to this festival. It was just really cool. There was like a class or maybe a camp, I don't know what it was, but a whole bunch of little kids. They were all together and teenagers and older people. I mean it was just really amazing like a cross section of people who were at this festival. And I just feel like—right in front of me there were these two, probably 12 or 13, if that, year-old girls and I just thought to myself, oh my God like I probably would have never in a million years have done this when I was that age by myself. They were there alone. Anyway, that was just what I was struck with.

There were instances when study participants felt embarrassed by or disappointed in the behavior of their fellow visitors. Julie noted that “it was kind of depressing by seeing that sign out there and then all these materialistic Americans just walking around looking at the sign, you know, just kind of “oh that’s nice” and then going on.” On the temple visit, she commented,

I felt a little embarrassed actually, just because you have these very serious monks in meditation and then you have these pictures flashing pictures at them. That was just a little embarrassing. That there was something that simple and beautiful and people were getting out their cameras and looking at that instead of experiencing it themselves.

Hank recounted a somewhat similar experience at a narrative session:

Like when I encountered that lady asking if they had Jesus in the country and her husband had to stop her. I just wonder, you know, I just feel embarrassed at the way people are acting. I mean not that there’s a problem asking that question, I think the reason he stopped her is because she was going to go on a little rampage of her own. Things like that. You know, an innocent question, what role does Jesus play in your world view? It’s interesting definitely but don’t push. It’s not set up to push people in your direction. You’re supposed to sit back and learn.

Commenting on her visit to the temple, Tasker also suggested that she was somewhat uncomfortable at the behavior of her fellow visitors.

What was happening here was that there was a line of monks and they were chanting and I actually felt a little uncomfortable at that moment because I felt

like—I hope they don't feel like animals in a zoo. Like it was this line of people filtering through and everyone's taking pictures.

She further added,

It's like, oh my God, I wonder what these people think of us because like again with back to the monks who were trying to pray and people were walking through taking pictures. Like this rude person and that person has got a personality disorder. You know, Americans being like what they are, I really find that when I travel, too, I'm especially conscious of like how Americans are perceived or how Americans present themselves I should really say because I don't think they're being perceived inaccurately by and large. I feel like, man you don't think at all about anything but yourself. So I definitely thought to myself, God I wonder if they're like, please get me out of here, or if they're fascinated by our culture.

The voice of the museum.

While not personally delivered, study participants often sought out the voice of the museum through the interpretive signage placed throughout the festival. Julie offered, “Yeah, yeah, I read all the signs.” Similarly, Hank said, “Oh, God, I read every one of them.” Brian explained, “Oh, absolutely, I always gravitate towards signs, oh, and that picture came out well. I'll show you the picture of the thing, of the sign because I thought it was very neat.” Of her interaction with signage, Tasker offered,

I would say that I looked around for the signs to read more about what I was seeing. Sometimes they were right there and sometimes I felt like I was seeking them out intentionally. But they were sort of stationed like outside the tents. So unlike a museum where you walk in and there's plaque after plaque, and you're

standing in line to read each plaque, I just felt like it's a totally different method of delivering information and sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't. But because of the nature of the exhibits themselves, because they were so experiential, whether or not you read the text mattered less, and I found myself seeking out the text because I have further questions, almost always after.

A Disquieting Encounter: Visits to the Temple

A central feature to the Bhutan program at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival was the Buddhist Temple. According to program curator, Preston Scott,

More than a month before the Festival opening, a team of ten traditional Bhutanese carpenters arrived in Washington to build a Ihakhang (Buddhist temple) at the center of the Festival site. For all but one of the Bhutanese craftsmen, it was their first trip outside of Bhutan—the first time they had ever been to a landscape without mountains. (Scott, 2008)

Study participants recalled their visits to the temple in some detail. A review of their reflections suggests that, in addition to a number of psychological processes, many of the social processes discussed above were evident as well. A few participant comments included below have been previously cited in this effort, however, they bear repeating as they refer specifically to the temple experience.

For all study participants, the temple was their first stop. Art recalls (while reviewing his photos) his experience in some detail.

This was the first place I went and not necessarily sure if it was necessarily the main entrance, but it just drew me right in and there was a very long line to see the inside of the temple. What's cool is once you get inside, not only do they have

the altar with the big gifts and things like that, but they had musicians playing traditional instruments and they had people, Bhutanese people, posted in the corners that were answering questions and they had a guy who put on this little good luck wrist ribbon things. . . . So there is a lot happening here and it was pretty neat. It was also neat, too, because there was like a plaque on the outside which says it was donated by the Bhutanese to the people of the United States. So that was really cool and I spent a lot of time in there. . . . Do you know what I liked about this type of a festival, too, is when I travel I feel funny taking pictures of people because sometimes they don't like that kind of thing, but here because it's all about learning about the culture, they kind of welcome it. So it's cool to do that and not get bad looks. Another shot [Figure 14]—what got me was this drum and this funky little piece that he uses to tap the drum to get that sort of signature Buddhist sound which I never realized how they did it.



Figure 14. Art's photo from inside the temple.

Julie, although enjoying her experience, also noted her embarrassment about other people's behavior:

It was very cool. I felt a little embarrassed actually just because you have these very serious monks in meditation and then you have these pictures flashing pictures at them. That was just a little embarrassing. . . . We were all so pushed through pretty fast too, so it was hard to really look around, but I looked at the different instruments more than anything that they were playing, that I'd never seen before.

Hank indicated some ambivalence in his comments, as well:

I really would have felt entirely out of place if it wasn't for that line of people in front of me with cameras and hats and stuff, you know. Definitely wanted to sit down for a while but we weren't sure if that was okay. But nothing about it felt disingenuous. I mean I felt like I was in some kind of temple or something. When you get in there, there's actually people doing what you would expect. I don't know anything about Buddhism but people playing music, burning incense, one guy was praying or meditating. So it actually made me feel awkward like I was walking through the middle of their ceremony.

Hank also commented, however, that he "just wanted to sit there all day" because it was "just very comfortable, very relaxing."

Brian recalled his experience in this way:

So they set up this temple, as you know, just for the purpose of the festival and inside there was monks praying and there was an altar on the left hand side. So on the right hand side you walk in and there are maybe ten monks chanting and

praying and then right hand side there was an altar that had candles and a guy who was tying things to people's wrists. I felt very funny taking pictures while I was inside the temple because you have these monks who are chanting and it just seemed very disrespectful to me to take pictures of inside, but the inside was beautiful.

When speaking of her experience, Tasker signaled some uncertainty as to what was actually being portrayed:

What was happening here was that there was a line of monks and they were chanting and I actually felt a little uncomfortable at that moment because I felt like, I hope they don't feel like animals in a zoo. Like it was this line of people filtering through and everyone's taking pictures and there really wasn't any information so much on what they were doing exactly. I mean you could infer that they were praying but I had all these questions about what they were doing and I wasn't really able to access the answers, I don't think. But beyond that I felt I was really, it felt like freak showish to me and that felt hard because—at least I hope they didn't feel that way but that's how I felt—like it was set up especially because—it's not like you walk in and walk out the same way. It was like this parade of people and these guys were like trying to pray or something. Or if they're not trying to pray, are they just praying for show? It's like that's just so—I was surprised that somebody who has like dedicated his life to religion would be willing to do it for show. I don't know. I just had all these thoughts going through my head as this was happening. Although it was a really, really cool temple and it's beautiful, really incredible.

Assessing The Experience

Each of the study participants spoke to their experience at the Festival as a whole. Their narratives help to answer the second of the research questions posed herein, which involves what study participants perceived as outcomes of their visit. Participant recollections, discussed in the section titled *The Missing Link*, also seem to suggest that there were particular outcomes that were desired by the participants but not realized. In assessing her experience, Julie offered,

I mean I do think it is a learning festival but not—I think there should be more opportunities to listen to lectures and more in depth lectures and reading materials besides boards like the stuff you pick up, like mini books. But, I think I still did get a good taste of the culture. . . . My impression is that it does educate Americans to some extent, but I'm not confident that it's going to stick with them. I think for, at least temporarily, it can create some sort of tolerance, but I'm not confident in the long run that that's possible in American culture.

When asked if she thought what she learned would “stick” with her, Julie replied, “absolutely.” When probed further as to any possible value of the festival for her, Julie said,

I guess you just forget, you know, living in your little box, you can definitely forget exactly how other people live, and I think it would raise tolerance to some degree, just for knowledge of even—little bits of knowledge they offer.

On the educational nature of the festival, Brian suggested,

I thought it was much more educational than I expected because of my prior festival experiences is that there is mostly food and music and this one, because it

had the narrative stage, I think it was much more educational. I actually preferred the narrative stage stuff over like the music and the food aspect of it.

Hank, in assessing the festival experience, offered,

It was so much more accessible. Like I said earlier, it kind of does feel like you're walking into somebody else's territory. So in some sense it feels like you're absorbing a little bit more I guess You just have all this going on around you. It's like in action going on around you. It's not like looking at it through glass or anything like that. It's more interesting. There's action going on around you. It's not a play. It feels a little more authentic. It feels way more authentic than a museum. And it's going to attract you more. . . . Other than the crowd dynamic it seems like you're immersed in it. I mean that whole temple is sitting there on the mall and then the dancing. It was great.

When probed to discuss his sense of "immersion" further, Hank said,

You're not reading it on pages, you're seeing it, you're engaged with it, it's tactile, you can touch it, it's physical. You're not imagining it. That was the other thing; like you read about things and for all you know, I mean I know it's not true, you don't consciously think it's a story but it kind of is until you actually get a physical sense of it—to me. But I have no real other comparison other than books.

Art's recalled his experiences in this way:

I guess because it's the Smithsonian, I should have known it would have been high quality, but what surprised me just what they put into it with the flags everywhere and the banners and the tents and the crafts. I really felt they were making something. You know, it wasn't just like a demonstration.

He added further,

In a weird way, I guess I was surprised by the whole thing. I mean, I expected the white tents and the demonstrations. I don't know, it was just really, really neat. Like I was totally absorbed into it and I forgot I was on the mall. Yeah, I wouldn't feel—like say I was in Bhutan necessarily, but I definitely was totally absorbed into it. . . . You are pretty much set free even on a level of security. Like very few things you couldn't touch. You can pick things up, you can talk to people. You're just kind of free to experience it.

When assessing her experience, Tasker said,

Enlightening. Based on I felt like I didn't know anything going in and not only did I not know anything about Bhutan but I felt like I really don't know much about the Folklife Festival. I actually was—I felt enlightened and impressed by how much work goes into a festival like this. You know, from the temple that gets built and the importing of clay to make the sculptures and it's like man, somebody like busted their ass to portray the culture of this like little country nestled underneath China where I didn't even know where it was.

She added,

Even the signage, I was like, you know, the colors and the text being informative but not too much. It just feels like a lot of research has gone into how to make this accessible to Joe Blow who wanders onto the Mall. It's just they're trying to represent the culture and the thing about culture is that everything touches-- culture is defined as all these different things that when put together make up a culture or a region or country and it seems like they tried really hard to represent

many, many facets of this culture. That's what I mean. I feel like I know a whole lot more about the culture than I did before.

In her assessment, Tasker also made some more personal comparisons:

So there was this sort of like the individual things that were going on but also it's like I was thinking about what in my life—like what would the Smithsonian Folk Life Festival of Tasker be like? You know? I don't know. But it's like I'd like to think that I have things in my life that I'm that passionate about. Like the equivalent of spending two days working on a weaving project because that's just what they do. And I think there probably are things like that, like I hope the things I do in my life are done with the same kind of heart that I was talking about and I think they are. It's just that I don't really like to name it exactly because I don't know that the people whose job it is to weave day in and day out necessarily identify that as having heart. Whereas I look at it and I'm like dude, you're like sheering the yak or whatever and then you're spinning it into yarn and you're gonna dye it and make it into a skein of yard and then weave it and have like five million different colors and this pattern is so incredibly intricate that it may take six months to make one piece. Yeah, you have heart, or at least dedication. And I hope that the things that I feel excited about in my life are things, that I have as much to give to that. I hope so. That's what I would strive for.

Each study participant spoke of following up on their visit by researching particular topics and/or telling others about their experience. All spoke of someday wanting to visit Bhutan.

A Missing Link

When assessing their experience, Brian, Art and Tasker all spoke to a disappointment that they did not get a sense of the everyday lives of Bhutanese people. Their comments suggest that each was looking for a way to connect their own lives with the lives of ordinary people in Bhutan. Brian spoke extensively about this concern:

One of the things that I didn't take away from the festival was whether—what their daily life was. I think it focuses a lot on the religious aspects, the artist stuff, artistic aspects, but it wasn't really—there wasn't much there in the way of—this is how the daily life of someone from Bhutan, what their life is. It was something I thought was missing. It wasn't something I went there to look for, but as I was going through I was like, well, this is all nice and good, but what are the—I get up, listen to NPR, get coffee, get on the train and I just don't have any sense after going to this exhibit of what their daily life was. . . . It's still, even after this experience, it's still an exotic culture to me. It's not like I feel like I know what the average Bhutanese—they get up in the morning and then what? I know that the monks pray, the monks make their own food, and I know that stuff, but I don't know what the average Bhutanese person does. So that was one thing that I felt surprised because I expected that more so from the festival because I thought that was kind of the reason for showcasing and—because I would suspect that the goal of the festival is to encourage respect and encourage diversity and just to share knowledge about what different cultures are and I just didn't really feel like I walked away feeling a great connection.

Art shared the same concern, although he did not speak as extensively to this point:

I think maybe if this exhibit fell short anywhere, I still don't really have a grasp—maybe this is their day to day life, but the whole idea of like waking up, like what do you do all day? Do you make the sand paintings? Maybe that's what they do, I don't know. Chores and things like that. The kids weren't really touched upon.

Tasker questioned how much the presentation represented day to day life in Bhutan:

I did have other questions that were like—had to do with how, like if I were to visit this country, how much of this would I see? Or is it these are the highlights. If somebody did a festival on the United States, they might have like something to represent the orange grove workers in Florida and the wine growers in California, and all those things are interesting and totally incredible crafts that have been passed down forever and ever. But if someone were to come to the United States, they would see strip mall. And part of it is I didn't ask that many questions and I only read a few of the signs. Like the dance for instance—traditional—is that the kind of dance that happens in every village with every person or is that like on the highest of holidays people put on this most incredible regalia and they do this incredible dance. And I found myself wondering how much of it we're seeing is really skimmed-off-the-top highlights—though it exists completely, it's not like they made it up—and how much of it is really part of day-to-day culture. Consistently I asked myself that question.

Discussion

This study has involved an attempt to understand visitor experiences at the 2008 Smithsonian Folk Festival, a free two-week festival held annually in Washington, D.C. In-depth interviews were done with five visitors, before and after each visited the Bhutan

program at the Festival. Researcher observations of festival visitors were also gathered and are included in select sections herein, primarily reinforcing conclusions drawn by participants. Returning to the central questions posed by this research effort, it can be asserted that, for this study's participants, there were a number of psychological and social processes that were activated during their festival visit as well as numerous outcomes. The festival visit was for each individual participant a multi-sensory experience—engaging their senses of sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste. This can be seen in comments regarding the smell of the incense, the colors used in the artwork, the sound of the drums during the dance performance, and the feel of the mud bricks that were being made on site. Further, the choices and the meaning-making efforts of the participants were both guided by and filtered through their personal characteristics, past experiences, and unique ways of viewing the world. Examples of this include Brian's recall of his Catholic upbringing when viewing the prayer flags, Art's use of his recent travel to make sense of the llama hair tents, as well as visitors' surprise at the impermanence of the mandala being created. Socially-oriented processes were in evidence as well. Official Bhutan program participants, fellow visitors and the voice of the museum through interpretive signage affected the ways in which study participants gathered and processed information and experiences. Numerous visitor recollections recount such social processes including comments about the value of observing festival demonstrators in action, using others' questions to gain knowledge, seeking out signage to augment direct experience with festival demonstrators, and, of course, experiences in the temple, where the actions of others were not always seen as appropriate. Assessing their experiences, study participants pointed to a number of products including increases

in information, tolerance, and self reflection—citing a sense of absorption or immersion as central to those outcomes. They spoke of a sense of access and of openness to exploration. Finally, they identified learning that they hoped to have gained but didn't—a sense of the everyday lives of Bhutanese citizens.

Museum Visit Theory

How can the experiences of the study participants be understood in light of current museum visit theory? It seems clear that Falk and Dierking's contextual model of learning is applicable. Within the recollections is evidence of all three of the model's contexts. The realm of personal context can be seen in the participants' perceptions, choices, expectations and use of prior knowledge and beliefs to make sense of incoming information. Here, too, one can draw parallels with Garoian's performance theory, particularly with regard to the performance of perception and autobiography, and with the visitor narrative considerations offered by Roberts. Falk and Dierking's sociocultural context is evident in both the direct and indirect contact of participants with festival demonstrators, other visitors and the voice of the museum via signage. Finally, while not as often directly spoken to, the physical elements of the festival program seem highly relevant and recall Falk and Dierking's physical context. For instance, the freedom of exploration felt by Art can be viewed as the result of choices made by festival organizers in both design and orientation decisions, as can the perceptual recollections of all of the study participants. The work of Falk and Dierking (2000) also speaks to the sense of immersion that participants felt, as when Art said that he forgot that he was on the Mall or when Hank spoke of the exhibit not feeling like a play, but feeling quite real. They suggest that museum visits can and often do result in what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has

termed a flow experience. Participants in such experiences generally are engaged in a way that is both multisensory and seems automatic, as if one is caught in the flow of a strong current.

Researchers in Australia and the United Kingdom have begun to consider the role of immersive experiences as they relate to learning (Jackson, 2008). Traditionally, immersion or immersive experience has been applied almost exclusively to new language learning. More recently, immersive experience has been considered in reference to computer gaming and virtual reality programming. Increasingly, the notion of immersion is being applied to other contexts (including arts and cultural activities), with links being drawn to both experiential and situated learning constructs. Research is in its infancy, however, while scholars contend with conceptualizing what constitutes an immersive experience, in what contexts they might develop, and what role the disposition of learners might play. The present study suggests that festivals can serve as immersive experiences and should be further studied with regard to this potential.

Cultural Contact and Socially Situated Cognition

A deeper look at study participants' narratives reveals a number of additional considerations, primary among them is the sense that the official demonstrators in the Bhutan exhibit are dynamic and authentic members of the Bhutanese culture. Given that participants did not feel they really learned about the everyday lives of Bhutanese people, it is unclear whether the demonstrators were considered as having special status or whether it was more a case of certain content, that of the practice of everyday life, not being communicated. Study participants did, however, cite their presence in someone's else's territory, frequently drawing distinctions between "us and them," the Americans

and the Bhutanese. What seems notable is that the “someone else” or the “them” is not the museum or its curators but rather the subjects of the exhibition—the Bhutanese. The official demonstrators are not merely cultural artifacts who have been displayed by museum personnel, but are authentic individuals representing and providing opportunities for meaningful cultural contact.

If what has been facilitated through the festival is the opportunity for cultural contact, a different, and perhaps more appropriate lens through which to view this study’s data is that of socially situated cognition. Smith and Semin (2004) suggest a model which considers social cognition as the result of social processes in socially meaningful environments. Social cognition, itself a concept with varying definitions and connotations, is here defined as how we learn about one another and through one another (see Chapter 1 for a fuller discussion). According to Smith and Semin, continued and reciprocal social interaction with others leads to cognition which is new, rather than simply a replaying or reworking of existing schema and scripts. While existing knowledge and beliefs work to inform this cognition, they are neither in control of the process nor its outcomes. Through this lens a festival may represent a context, mediated by cultural and social processes, for teaching and learning to occur.

This focus on interaction and transaction is reminiscent of Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory and the work of Dewey, as well. Vygotsky (1978) suggests that cognition is highly dependent on social interaction with others, specifically those more knowledgeable. In the case considered by this study, one could certainly conceive of official festival presenters as teachers with distinct knowledge and skill to

share with learners, the festival visitors. The festival, then, is the classroom in which this teaching and learning is facilitated.

Smith and Semin (2004) suggest a number of key elements through which socially situated learning occurs. First and foremost among these is that communication is socially situated action. This notion of communication is, however, a complicated construct in and of itself. It involves all parties in the communication, their intentions, their choices, and their judgments. For study participants, it seems clear that communication happens on numerous levels and in multiple ways—both verbal and non-verbal. For most, all of the senses become involved in festival interactions. Participants recall things that are said and done by festival demonstrators and their fellow visitors. They demonstrate through their recollections that they are not only receiving information, but processing and reacting to it. Visitor questions and reactions at the mandala exhibit clearly illustrate this process in action. One can also view participants seeking out additional information via signage as reacting to information that they have received and, at least partially, processed.

Semin and Smith (2004) further suggest that situations and contexts have active influence on one's social identity and behavior. This is clearly evident in the data presented. In the festival setting, four of the five participants report being not completely comfortable interacting verbally yet they interacted in many other ways—among them, snapping photos, physically attending to particular exhibits or events, and, in some cases, touching displayed objects. In the case of the temple, study participants questioned appropriate behavior for themselves and others while still taking in what the temple had to offer. The influence exerted by situations and contexts also acts, according to Semin

and Smith, to trigger memories, signal opportunity, or activate intentions. Again, this seems to be illustrated by the narratives offered by study participants. Brian actively compares the smell of Bhutanese incense and the waving of prayer flags with memories of his Catholic upbringing. Tasker views the work of the artisans in light of her own artistic inclinations and pursuits.

Conclusions

One is left, however, to consider why the opportunities for social and cultural contact offered by the festival are of value to study participants. To understand this, it may be useful to return to the thoughts and feeling of the study participants before they visited the festival. When asked how they do and might go about learning about a new culture, each talked about gathering information from books and electronic sources. When probed further, each suggested that to really learn about a culture it would be helpful to visit and perhaps live amongst the people of that culture. Some suggested that a sense of “culture shock” may be desirable in such a learning pursuit. Might the festival program, represent, in albeit a much smaller way, an opportunity to experience a culture, to a large extent on its own terms? Might the festival program allow for engaging in dialogue or communication, verbally and otherwise, in pursuit of knowledge of the other? Might these opportunities be offered in an environment that allows the learner to retain his or her individuality, sense of safety, and personal goals—a sort of culture without the shock? It would seem that each could be answered in the affirmative given the experiences of this study’s participants. It is also true, however, that within the festival experiences, there were times when a so-called culture shock was evident, most notably during the temple visit. It might also be argued that the vivid recollections of these

disquieting encounters provide evidence of deeper processing and reflection. This is reminiscent of a kind of disequilibrium which can lead to learning as suggested by Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969).

When considering the value of the above detailed research, it could be argued that since the Smithsonian Folklife Festival is a singular high-profile event, understanding gained about individual visitor experiences of it are of only limited value. Further, one could question if the Bhutan program itself was unique in offering opportunities for social contact—suggesting that maybe all Festival programs do not hold such promise. Finally, the nature of this qualitative inquiry does not allow us to suggest that the experiences of this study's participants are either universal or even likely to be representative of other visitors' experiences. All of the above represent valid questions for consideration.

However, this study's revelations might lead us to consider in a more focused way particular visit elements and experiences discussed herein. Questions for possible study include how does the multi-sensory nature of an event or experience relate to visit assessments and outcomes? What role might more authentic cultural representation play in social cognition? When does the presence of other learners help rather than hinder learning from events of this type? How can a museum or other organization mediate visit experiences in ways that do not usurp individual choice and control? Gaining insight into questions such as these is essential to creating effective and innovative adult learning opportunities in nonformal settings.

The more universal and, arguably, more essential question posed by this inquiry, however, is how can opportunities for real and authentic cultural contact, and thus

intercultural learning and tolerance, be facilitated, given substantial psychological, social, and physical impediments to such contact? This study does appear to offer us an answer to that question, albeit, a partial and qualified one. The living museum of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival does seem to offer and to facilitate dynamic and authentic opportunities for cultural contact and social cognition.

References

- Bramadat, P. A. (2001). Shows, selves, and solidarity: Ethnic identity and cultural spectacles in Canada. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 33(3), 78-98.
- Bramadat, P. A. (2005). Toward a new politics of authenticity: Ethno-cultural representation in theory and practice. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 37(1), 1-20.
- Cantwell, R. (1991). Conjuring culture: Ideology and magic in the Festival of American Folklife. *Journal of American Folklore*, 104(412), 148-163.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). Why narrative? In *Narrative inquiry* (pp. 1-20). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Collier, J. (1979). Visual anthropology. In J. Wagner (Ed.), *Images of information* (pp. 271-280). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Dewey, J. (1916/1944). *Democracy and education*. New York: The Free Press.
- Dudzinska-Przesmitzki, D., & Grenier, R. S. (2008). Nonformal and informal adult learning in museums. *Journal of Museum Education*, 33(1), 9-22.
- Falk, J. H. (2008). Calling all spiritual pilgrims: Identity in the museum experience. *Museum News*, 87(1), 62-67.
- Falk, J. H., & Dierking, L. D. (2000). *Learning from museums: Visitor experiences and the making of meaning*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

- Flyvbjerg, B. (2004). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. F. Gubrium & D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice* (pp. 420-434). London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Garoian, C. R. (2001). Performing the museum. *Studies in Art Education*, 42(3), 234-248.
- Hurworth, R. (2003). *Photo-interviewing for research*. Guildford, England: University of Surrey.
- Jackson, N. (2008). Immersive experiences working paper: Part 1, contexts. Retrieved January 21, 2009, from <http://immersiveexperience.pbwiki.com/Concepts+>
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- National Mall and Memorial Parks. (2008, June 16, 2008). Retrieved July 22, 2008, from <http://www.nps.gov/nama/>
- Piaget, J., & Inhelder, B. (1969). *The psychology of the child*. New York: Basic Books.
- Richardson, L., & St. Pierre, E. A. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 959-978). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Roberts, L. C. (1997). *From knowledge to narrative: Educators and the changing museum*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.
- Sachatello-Sawyer, B., Fellenz, R. A., Burton, H., Gittings-Carlson, L., Lewis-Mahony, J., & Woolbaugh, W. (2002). *Adult museum programs: Designing meaningful experiences*. Blue Ridge Summit, PA: AltaMira Press.
- Scott, P. T. (2008). Bhutan at the 2008 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. *Talk Story*, 34, 1-4.

- Smith, E. R., & Semin, G. R. (2004). Socially situated cognition: Cognition in its social context. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 36, pp. 53-117). San Diego, CA: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Smith, J. A. (2004). Reflecting on the development of interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 1*, 39-54.
- Smithsonian Folklife Festival. (2006). Retrieved November 22, 2006, from <http://www.folklife.si.edu/center/festival.html>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1934/1987). Thinking and speech. In R. W. Rieber & A. S. Carton (Eds.), *The collected works of L.S. Vygotsky, volume I: Problems of general psychology* (pp. 39-285). New York: Plenum.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Festival Participants

Bhutan: Land of the Thunder Dragon

RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Zhung Dratsang (Monastic Body)

Venerable Tsheney Lopen Tandin Tshewang, Thimphu District, ritual chief

Rinzin, Wangdue Phodrang District, chant master

Gyeltshen, Wangdue Phodrang District, choepen (shrine person)

Kinzang Tshering, Chukha District, dhung (long horn) player

Namgay Wangchuk, Punakha District, mandala maker

Tazi, Chukha District, torna (ritual cake) maker

Yangka, Paro District, astrologer

Chimi, Wangdue Phodrang District, masked dancer

Kado, Punakha District, jaling (wind instrument) player

Kencho, Thimphu District, nga (drum)/kangdung (horn)/dhungka (conch) player

Kinley Penjor, Wangdue Phodrang District, nga (drum)/kangdung (horn)/dhungka (conch) player

Kinley Penjor, Punakha District, masked dancer

Pema Dorji, Thimphu District, dancer

Shokey, Punakha District, masked dancer

Penpa, Paro District, dhung (long horn) player

Tashi Wangchuk, Thimphu District, jaling (wind instrument) player

Tshering Dorji, Thimphu District, chief leader

Tshewang Rigzin, Haa District, masked dancer

MUSIC AND DANCE TRADITIONS

Royal Academy of Performing Arts (RAPA)

Apa Dodo, Wangdue Phodrang District, masked dancer

Dengo, Trongsa District, dancer

Dorji Dakpa, Samdrup Jongkhar District, dancer

Dorji Norbu, Samdrup Jongkhar District, masked dancer

Kencho Wangdi, Paro District, dancer

Khandu, Paro District, masked dancer

Kinley Penjor, Trongsa District, dancer

Lhaden, Bumthang District, dancer

Nim Dem, Paro District, dancer

Pema Lhamo, Bumthang District, dancer

Pema Tenzin, Mongar District, dancer

Pema Wangdi, Dagana District, musician

Penjor, Paro District, masked dancer

Phub Lham, Punakha District, dancer

Rinchen Wangdi, Mongar District, dancer

Sangay Wangmo, Trashigang District, dancer

Sherab Dorji, Trashigang District, masked dancer

Sonam Chogyel, Zhemgang District, masked dancer

Tashi Lhamo, Paro District, dancer

Tashi Phuntsho, Pema Gatshel District, musician

Thinley Pemo, Trashigang District, dancer

Tshering Dorjee, Haa District, masked dancer

Tshering Wangdi, Trashigang District, masked dancer

Ugyen Tshewang, Pema Gatshel District, masked dancer

Wangchuk, Wangdue Phodrang District, dancer

Wangchuk, Trashigang District, masked dancer

Wangchukla, Zhemgang District, musician

Yeshi Wangchuk, Paro District, masked dancer

**ZORIG CHUSUM
(THIRTEEN TRADITIONAL ARTS)**

Chimi Pelmo, Thimphu District,
incense maker

Dawa Gyeltshen, Mongar District,
wood carver

*Dawa Penjor, Wangdue Phodrang
District, incense maker*

Debu Zangmo, Mongar District,
bamboo weaver

Deki, Trashy Yangtse District, weaver

Dung Dorji, Bumthang District,
calligrapher

*Karma Sonam Yuden, Mongar
District, wood carver*

Kinzang Wangdi, Trashigang District,
painter

*Kinzang Wangmo, Bumthang
District, potter*

Kumbu, Wangdue Phodrang District,
painter

Namgyel Dema, Trashigang District,
weaver

*Nim Dorji, Paro District, clay
sculptor*

Pelden Dorji, Trashy Yangtse District,
wood turner

Phajo, Paro District, blacksmith

*Ponyala, Mongar District, bamboo
weaver*

Rada, Wangdue Phodrang District,
embroiderer

*Rinchen, Punakha District, gold-
and silversmith*

Rinzin Wangmo, Bumthang District,
weaver

*Sangay Tenzin, Wangdue Phodrang
District, painter*

Seldon, Lhuntse District, weaver

Singay Karmo, Punakha District,
embroiderer

Tashi, Thimphu District, silversmith

*Tenzin Thinley, Trashy Yangtse
District, wood carver*

Thinley, Paro District, painter

Thinley Dorji, Haa District,
slate carver

*Tshering Dorji, Trashy Yangtse
District, wood turner*

ARCHITECTURE

Karma Wangchuk, Trongsa District,
building engineer

Karma, Punakha District

Khandu, Punakha District

Lhendup, Punakha District

Namgay Tshering, Punakha District

*Nim Dorji, Wangdue Phodrang
District*

Pem Tshering, Lhuntse District

Phurpa Tshering, Punakha District

*Tshewang Dorji,
Wangdue Phodrang District*

Zeko, Punakha District

FOODWAYS

Phurpa Lhamo, Trashigang District

Tashi Dorji, Mongar District

Tandin, Mongar District

PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT

Karma Wangdi, Punakha District

Kencho Zam, Thimphu District,
Layap farmer

Singye Wangmo, Punakha District

Sonam Choden, Thimphu District

*Tshering, Gasa District, Layap
farmer*

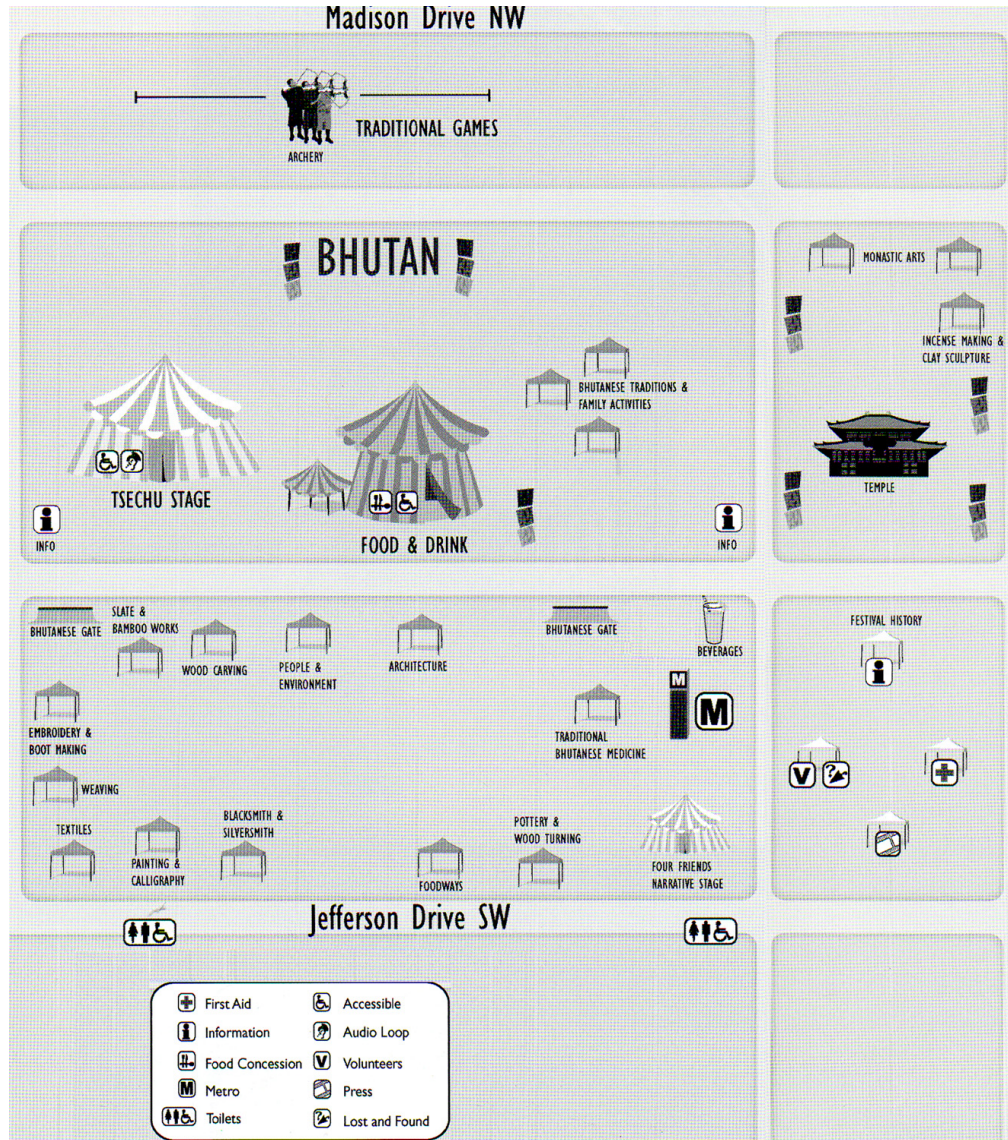
TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Dorji Uden, Bumthang District,
doctor

Sonam Dorjee, Trongsa District

Sonam Tobgay, Mongar District,
doctor

APPENDIX B



APPENDIX C

Wednesday June 25

BHUTAN



	Bhutan Kitchen	Four Friends Narrative Stage	Tsechu Stage
11:00	Opening Ceremony Dancehall		
12:00	Cattle God's Gifts: Butter and Cheese		Traditional Bhutanese Music and Dance
		The Four Friends Story	
1:00	Taste of Bhutan	Life of Monks and Nuns	Ritual Monastic Dance
2:00		Understanding Art in Bhutan	Traditional Bhutanese Music and Dance
3:00	Buckwheat Noodles	Gross National Happiness	Traditional Bhutanese Music and Dance
		Images of Bhutan	
4:00	Festive Foods	Passing on Traditional Arts	Ritual Monastic Dance
5:00		Storytelling	Closing Ritual

Ongoing Bhutan Activities

In addition to the daily scheduled discussions and performances, there are ongoing demonstrations of Bhutan's cultural and ritual traditions throughout the Festival site. Visitors are invited to meet Bhutanese participants to learn more about the kingdom's rich heritage and diverse environment through *zorig chusum* (thirteen traditional arts), monastic arts, foodways, traditional medicine, Bhutan's national sport of archery, and other recreational activities.

Bhutan Kids' Activities

Visit the Treasure Hunt tent to pick up your "Treasures of Bhutanese Culture" activity sheet, which will help you discover the eight lucky signs, learn some Dzongkha (the national language of Bhutan), and find new ways to explore the Bhutan program. Elsewhere on-site, you can color your own Bhutanese postage stamp and mail it, make traditional Bhutanese biscuits, learn some Bhutanese dance steps, try on a *kira* or *gho*, draw and paint in the Bhutanese style, use a block print to make a prayer flag, and more.

APPENDIX D

The following script was used to recruit study participants:

(Name of referrer) suggested that you might be willing to participate in a research study that I am doing as part of my doctoral program at Georgia State University. I would be interested in your experience visiting the Smithsonian Folklife Festival which is happening on the National Mall between June 25th and July 6th. What I would be asking you to do is to visit the Bhutan section of the festival either once or twice and to take pictures of performances, exhibits, and other scenes that interest or intrigue you. I will provide the camera, which you will return at the end of your visit, unless you would prefer to use your own. You can visit on day(s) and time(s) that are convenient to you. I would interview you for about one hour before you visit and for about one-to two hours after you visit. We can schedule all interviews at a time and place convenient to you. During the interviews I would just ask you to tell me the story of your visit—what you saw, what was interesting. I would have the pictures there to help you tell the story.