

A Gardener's Experience of Document Work at a Historic Landscape Site

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ABSTRACT

Research in document work has tended to take a sociocultural perspective. Recent interest in document experience invites the consideration of document work from the perspective of an individual's lived experience. This paper reports on a holistic, single-case study of how the head gardener at Shofuso Japanese House and Garden, a historic landscape site in Philadelphia, experiences the document work involved in developing a comprehensive garden plan. A hermeneutic analysis of the data reveals how the underlying foundational values of authenticity, education and reducing ambiguity support the process of document work in this case, which involves summoning diverse knowledge, channeling the master and stepping back. This process is punctuated by organizational and historical challenges. These findings suggest that the theoretical framework of foundation-process-challenges may be used to study the lived experience of document work in other cases. Further ramifications are discussed for practice in gardening and historical document work.

Keywords

documentation, document work, document experience, information experience, landscape gardening

"That is well said," replied Candide, "but we must cultivate our garden." (Voltaire, 1759/2005, p. 94)

INTRODUCTION

Since its introduction by Trace (2007), *document work* has offered a research perspective for exploring many dialogic and information-laden processes that went unnoticed in prior studies in the realm of information behavior. This paper contributes to research in this tradition by exploring document work from the perspective of lived experience.

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Despite a somewhat longer legacy in other disciplines, lived experience has only recently been acknowledged as a way for information science research to be truly impactful in enhancing lives (Bruce, Davis, Hughes, Partridge, & Stoodley, 2014).

To investigate the lived experience of document work, I first review the relevant literature. This review guides my questioning in an in-depth case study (Yin, 2014) of document work in a historic landscape garden. The findings from this study lead to a framework for research into the experience of document work, along with a number of consequences for theory and practice.

BACKGROUND

This section presents the document as a theoretical construct defined by documentality; surveys the research in document work and document experience; and outlines research in information behavior relevant to garden documentation and design work more broadly.

The Document and Document Work

Renewed interest in the document can be traced back to Buckland (1991), who argued for the primacy of information-as-thing. Over the past 25 years, the neo-documentalist literature has blossomed, both theoretically and empirically (Buckland, 2015).

In a continued effort to define the document's conceptual dimensions, Frohmann (2012) has introduced the notion of documentality, which refers to a document's "capacity to produce, afford, allow, encourage, permit, influence, render possible, block or forbid the generation of marks, traces or inscriptions" in the way it is arranged with other things (Frohmann, 2012, p. 175). Documentality has four aspects:

1. **Functionality:** Documents perform social functions and define social roles.
2. **Historicity:** Documents are embedded within a particular historical context.
3. **Social Complexity:** Documents involve heterogeneous arrangements of technologies, people and information.
4. **Autonomous Agency:** Documents influence peoples' thoughts, feelings and actions.

Empirical research into documents has taken many forms. One emerging tradition is document work, conceptualized by Trace (2007) as the myriad behaviors and activities related to documents in a given setting, including both the creation of new documents and dealing with existing documents. Document work has been researched in diverse disciplinary (Trace, 2011) and domain settings, including:

- science (Latour & Woolgar, 1986; Shankar, 2009)
- healthcare (Fitzpatrick, 2000; McKenzie, 2006)
- agency (Finn & Oreglia, 2016; Harper, 1998)
- everyday life (Brown & Duguid, 2000; McKenzie & Davies, 2012; Koscijew, 2015)
- school (Lundh & Dolatkah, 2016; Trace, 2007)

These studies have revealed the social processes involved in document creation and use, but further research is needed to develop a more general account of these complexities.

Largely, research in document work has used ethnographic and historical methods; other research traditions may contribute further nuances toward developing a general theory of document work. Trace (2016), for instance, describes how ethnomethodology (related to but distinct from ethnography) can be fruitful to this end.

Moreover, research based on the experience of individual document workers is needed. As theorized, documents have material, social and individual-human aspects (Lund, 2009), but research in document work has only explored the material and social. This suggests that research in the budding area of document experience may be harmonious with that in document work.

Document Experience

As reviewed by Case and O'Connor (2016), the study of information use and outcomes dates back to the 1980s, but researching in-the-moment engagement with information—what Kari (2007) calls the internalization of information-as-thing—has only emerged recently. This research area, termed *information experience* (Bruce et al., 2014), is defined as the “complex, multidimensional engagement with information” (Bruce et al., p. 4), with a focus on

the way in which people experience or derive meaning from the way in which they engage with information and their lived worlds as they go about their daily life and work. This goes beyond how they make meaning from an objective entity identifiable as information, to consider what informs them and how they are informed, encompassing the many nuances of that experience within different cultures, communities and contexts. (Bruce et al., p. 6)

Information experience is an important area of study because individual users are the ultimate end of information research and development, and the experience of individual users has not always been taken into account. Rather, the researcher or professional has traditionally designated what

they think is important. “In contrast, assigning centrality to people’s information experience allows us to gain insights into what other people consider to be of importance” (Bruce et al., p. 11).

Taking such a bottom-up approach to research and development can reveal previously-hidden phenomena and biases, which has been recognized more widely in the philosophy of science (Harding, 2015). Indeed, the domain of information experience seems to be a fruitful addition to research in information behavior. Ford (2015) argues that information behavior researchers should “produce findings of greater relevance to practice by focusing on information outcomes [including] whether and how information is used, and what impact it has on the user and others” (p. 240). Information experience is well-suited to answer this call.

Approaching information experience from the document perspective has given rise to the research area of *document experience*, introduced by Latham (2014). This research area seeks a holistic, multidimensional account of how humans engage with documents, to include cognitive, affective, temporal and corporeal dimensions, among others. This approach is phenomenological, considering a person to be inextricable from their lifeworld. As documents also have lifeworlds (Wood & Latham, 2014), such an account must also consider how a document’s infrastructural context comes to bear on the document experience (Carter, 2016). To date, document experience research has been largely conceptual, and the area would benefit from further empirical work.

This paper contributes empirically to the study of document experience by way of developing a new approach to document work. It also, more generally, introduces a novel research domain to information science: the landscape garden. Though landscape architecture and other forms of gardening have longstanding documentary traditions, they have not benefited from research in information science. As gardening presents unique information challenges, attention to this setting may result in worthwhile mutual learning.

Information in the Garden

Part of what makes us human is our capacity for the externalization of symbolic thought (Bates, 2005). With writing and other forms of documentation, we can communicate across time and space, allowing for technological advances that would otherwise not be possible. Emphasizing this, Briet (1951/2006, p. 20) calls our species “Homo documentator.” As societies become more complex, documents proliferate and document work becomes a cultural necessity (Buckland, 2015).

Gardeners are no exception. Garden documentation is widespread, as evidenced by large-scale documentation efforts by the Archives of American Gardens (Smithsonian Institute, n.d.), which has collected historical information on dozens of American gardens. Such garden documents include surveys, planting plans, calendars, photographs and inventories from any number of historical points.

Documentation is not only limited to institutional gardens; guides for home gardeners, too, emphasize the importance of documentation for growing and maintaining a successful garden (e.g., Elzer–Peters, 2012). Even so, gardening has not yet been addressed in the information science literature. To be sure, landscape architecture has developed documentation best practices (Marcucci, 2000), but this work has been isolated from advances in information science. Consequently, despite its ubiquity and importance, information systems to support garden documentation have yet to reach the sophistication of those in other domains.

Garden documentation involves the seeking and using of information in order to guide the creation of new information (the resulting documents) under particular constraints. As such, garden document work can be seen as a type of design work. Other types of design work, such as art and architecture, have been investigated in information science. Court's (1997) study on engineering designers demonstrates the extensive use of personal experience and knowledge in design. Frank (1999) studied the information seeking and browsing of art students in academic libraries, finding that they valued their browsing experiences, given the visual nature of their information needs. Tidline (2003) details how artists regard their medium of expression as significant and consider engaging with other artworks an important part of the creative process. Mougnot, Bouchard, Aoussat and Westerman (2008) suggest that designers browse continually for inspiration using personal libraries and that, given their abstract information needs (e.g., a visual of a certain mood), direct searches are not always possible. Makri and Warwick (2010) studied the online information behavior of architects, uncovering a preference for visual information and an interest in information as inspiration.

This body of research suggests that designers use multiple information sources in their work, some of which appeal to traditional epistemic ends while others are for inspiration, and that they may prefer visual sources and value browsing. These findings echo those from document work research, such as the notion that people bring background knowledge, internalized from a variety of sources, to their work (Trace, 2016), but they are limited in the artificiality of their methods, attention to only certain aspects of information behavior, and a cognitivist conceptualization of information. Breaching the topic directly from the perspective of document work, then, using a naturalistic and holistic approach, may reveal additional insights about the information behavior of designers.

Research Questions

This review of the literature motivates further study to validate and extend the concept of documentality. This can be investigated through document work, which, in turn, can be approached through document experience. A study of the experience of document work would constitute a novel approach to document work and furnish needed empirical

data regarding document experience. Garden documentation warrants further exploration and presents a research setting for such a study. Thus the research question emerges: *How does a landscape gardener experience document work?*

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the case study research methodology to examine the document work experience of the head gardener at a historical Japanese garden in Philadelphia in the creation of a garden plan. Data included interviews and a document survey, and was analyzed through the metatheory of hermeneutic phenomenology.

Case Study Research

The above literature review motivated a descriptive research question, calling for a holistic and naturalistic approach to address limitations in prior research. The case study research method (specifically, a “holistic, single-case study”; Yin, 2014, p. 51) was selected to address this question, as it presents an ideal way to approach descriptive research questions in depth (Yin).

The case study method involves three key elements: a *research question*, *theoretical propositions* and the *unit of analysis* (Yin, 2014). The *research question* in this study sought an understanding document work from the perspective of a gardener. The *theoretical propositions*, which serve as a blueprint to guide questioning, stemmed from the literature suggesting that certain formal characteristics of documents may be more salient than others (e.g., visual vs. textual, offline vs. online), that decisions may be based as much in background knowledge as in external information sources, and that external pressures may constrain the work. The third key element of case study research is the *unit of analysis*. Prior research suggests that work tasks can serve as fruitful units of analysis (Byström & Hansen, 2002); thus, a specific garden documentation task was sought as the unit of analysis in this study.

Case Selection

Yin (2014) suggests that cases in case study research should be selected to maximize new learning. In this study, I selected as my case the creation of a comprehensive garden plan at Shofuso, a historic Japanese house and garden site in Philadelphia.

I learned about and began visiting Shofuso shortly after I moved to Philadelphia for my doctoral studies. I enjoy visiting Japanese gardens, which offer a revivifying respite from city life; since my childhood, I have also been interested in other aspects of Japanese culture. In 2014, I became a garden volunteer at Shofuso in order to spend more time at the site in a deeper way; commensurately, I have enjoyed learning about the site's rich history.

Shofuso Japanese House and Garden

Japan and Philadelphia have a history of mutual exchange dating back to the 1840s. Early diplomacy and commerce paved the way for Japan's participation in the world's fair as part of the U.S. Centennial Exposition of 1876, held in Philadelphia, marking the end of a centuries-long period of Japanese isolation (Chance & Toda, 2015). Three decades later, a 14th-century Japanese temple gate was installed at the site of the earlier world's fair as a show of continued Japanese-American amity; the site was later enriched by a traditional Japanese-style garden (Ozawa, 2010).

In 1949, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City launched its *House in the Garden* series to showcase architecture from around the world (Ozawa, 2010). The third installation, a 17th-century Japanese house built with traditional tools and materials, opened in 1954; the house was a gift of the America-Japan Society of Tokyo on behalf of the Japanese people to the American people as a sign of goodwill, and it was also noted for its educational impact on the American people (Chance & Toda, 2015).

As chronicled by Chance and Toda (2015), the house remained on view at MoMA until October 1955, when it was dismantled and planned to be moved, though a destination had not yet been decided. Incidentally, the temple gate in Philadelphia had burned down a few months prior. This was as much fortunate as it was unfortunate, as it provided an ideal location for the reinstallation of the Japanese house. Thus the house was given to Philadelphia, christened Shofuso (Japanese for "pine breeze villa"), and opened to the public in 1956.

To accompany the house, the Japanese garden initially built around the temple gate was redesigned by landscape architect Tansai Sano. The garden, opened to the public in 1958, is a "nationally-recognized historic landscape consistently cited for its authenticity" (Chance & Toda, 2015, p. 266), and exemplifies three types of Japanese garden: a hill-and-pond viewing garden, a tea garden and a courtyard garden. Over the following decades, funding issues contributed to the site's disrepair, but restoration efforts since the 1970s improved the situation, culminating in the establishment of Friends of the Japanese House and Garden in 1982 as the organization charged with maintaining the site (Ozawa, 2010). Since the formation of this group, a number of restoration projects on the house and garden have been carried out. Today, the garden at Shofuso is ranked in the top three Japanese gardens in America, and the house is regarded as the finest example of its architectural style outside Japan (Chance & Toda, 2015).

Shofuso thus pertains to a storied tradition in the relationship between Japan and Philadelphia. Shofuso also importantly serves as an educational touchstone for Japanese culture on the U.S. East Coast; in addition to operating as a museum, Shofuso also puts on workshops, tea ceremonies and other events. Continued efforts seek to "preserve, maintain, protect and interpret Shofuso," as

stated in the organization's mission (Shofuso, n.d.). Document work is inherent to this mission, which involves conducting historical research, publishing materials for diverse audiences, consulting with experts, negotiating organizational issues, managing finances and more.

The Comprehensive Garden Plan

I selected the garden at Shofuso for further study in light of an ongoing project that represents a turning point for the organization: the creation of the comprehensive garden plan. This document, informed by Shofuso's historical trajectory, is meant to guide future work in the garden as part of fulfilling Shofuso's organizational mission. I learned about the plan from the head gardener during a volunteering session. Because of the complexity of the processes at play, I deemed the creation of this plan worthy of formal research. Moreover, a focus on the garden would serve as a counterweight, given that most of the research to date at Shofuso has focused on the house alone (Ozawa, 2010).

The comprehensive garden plan was conceived in mid-2015, but work on the plan did not begin until Shofuso closed for the winter in October. Data was collected between December 2015 and January 2016.

Data Collection

In this study, data collection consisted primarily of two 75-minute interviews with the head gardener. The interviews were scheduled before and after the gardener's presentation of an initial draft of the comprehensive garden plan to the garden working group, which includes Shofuso's executive director and an expert Japanese garden consultant, among others. In the first interview, I investigated the information seeking of the gardener, with a particular focus on the documents that were available to her in preparing the comprehensive garden plan. The second interview focused on the comprehensive garden plan itself in attempt to discern how the various source documents described in the first interview were used in creating the plan. The documents used and created by the gardener in this work were also collected as data for analysis.

Data Analysis

The plan for data analysis in this study included several dimensions: First, it employed a temporal scheme, considering data before and after the completion of the initial draft of the comprehensive garden plan; second, it was guided by the theoretical work presented above; and third, it employed the specific tools of hermeneutic phenomenology, pattern matching, narrative threading and the consideration of rival explanations.

Data analysis proceeded through the lens of hermeneutic phenomenology, an interpretative metatheory developed for investigating human experiences (van Manen, 2014). This metatheory has been fruitfully adopted by some researchers in information science (Suorsa & Huotari, 2014; Vamanu, 2012). The basic premise of hermeneutic phenomenology is that the world is already pregnant with meaning even before

we attempt to analyze it; hermeneutics seeks to uncover and reflect upon this primordial meaning, which is often hidden by the very act of intentional analysis (van Manen). However, this meaning can never be fully grasped, and thus interpretations are always contingent.

The goal in hermeneutic phenomenological research is to develop a naive eye through which to view the world in its inherent complexity and convey these findings to the wider community (van Manen, 2014). Thus hermeneutic phenomenology does not hold knowledge as its epistemic aim, per se, but rather seeks *understanding*—that is, an appreciation for the dynamic relationships among the processes constitutive of a phenomenon (Vamanu, 2012). Notably, understanding has also been proposed as a suitable epistemic aim for information science more generally (Bawden, 2016; Budd, 1995).

Accordingly, data analysis in this study was inductive and iterative. Analysis began with the manual transcription of the interviews, allowing them to be “relived.” Then, the interview transcripts were open-coded for emerging patterns and themes in cycles. Memos were recorded between cycles which reflected an evolving understanding of the processes at play; in subsequent cycles, codes were modulated to reflect this evolving understanding. To aid in this analysis, a data accounting sheet (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) was made to tabulate all the documents used by the gardener. This sheet included the formal characteristics of each document, as well as summaries of how the gardener experienced and conceptualized them.

As described by Yin (2014), analysis in case study research should include *pattern matching*—that is, attempting to link the data to the pre-established theoretical propositions (either as support or refutation). As such, the latter stages of analysis included reviewing the data in light of these propositions. Likewise, attention was paid to establishing a *chain of evidence* (Yin), allowing the logic leading from data to findings to be traced and ensuring that findings are well-grounded in the data. Finally, findings were framed in narrative fashion, as suggested by Yin, and rival explanations were considered.

FINDINGS

At Shofuso, the head gardener is responsible for “everything and anything related to the garden,” from pruning and mowing to managing interns, ordering supplies and authoring the garden blog. Her work is constrained by several factors, including the garden’s historicity, financial limitations and the decisions of the garden working group. At present, the creation of the comprehensive garden plan occupies most of her time.

The creation of this plan draws on the gardener’s stored knowledge base and involves working with a number of different documents, such as surveys, maps, diagrams and historic photographs of the site, as well as textual accounts of the site’s development, Japanese gardening technique

and philosophy and regarding Tansai Sano. Some of these documents were readily accessible, while others required visits to archives in Philadelphia, New York City and Kyoto. Working with these documents involves personal reflection as well as discussions and negotiation with other stakeholders at Shofuso, and the garden plan itself is likewise subject to dialogic development. My understanding of the gardener’s journey through this document work is articulated below.

Making a Master Plan

The comprehensive garden plan divides the garden into 22 areas. For each area, the head gardener and the garden consultant first make an initial assessment, identifying obvious safety or visitor experience issues. Next, they “dissect” the area, determining its essential features. This involves, in part, referring to a previously-established document outlining the garden’s defining features. Next, they suggest improvements for how the area can better reflect its essence, including a list of next steps for each suggestion. Finally, a project list is created. At the current stage, this work has been done for one area of the garden as a proof of concept. The initial assessment of this area identified the stepping stones as a safety hazard; the essence of the area was determined to be a pathway between the house and the tea garden; and the suggested improvements included replacing the stepping stones to bolster the area’s function as a pathway and enhancing the visitor experience of the stream along this pathway.

Experiencing Document Work

A hermeneutic analysis of the head gardener’s account of her work revealed that an underlying *foundation* supports the *process* of document work, and that this process is marked by certain *challenges* (Figure 1).

Foundation

Underlying the gardener’s experience of document work are three guiding values, or desired outcomes. These include *authenticity* and *education*, which mirror Shofuso’s mission, as well as *reducing ambiguity*.

Authenticity as a value emerges in two ways. First, the gardener wants Shofuso to remain true to the essence of its

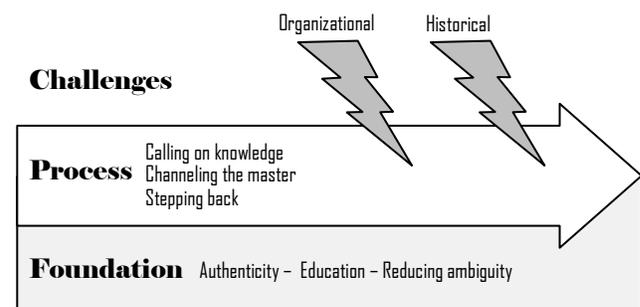


Figure 1. Foundation, process and challenges in the gardener’s document work experience

historic self, which is seen in the gardener's efforts to understand Shofuso's historic past. At her disposal are a panoply of historic documents, including textual accounts, drawn plans and some photographs. The plans pose a particular challenge: It is not always clear which are surveys of actual garden conditions and which are plans for future conditions; and more pressingly, it is unclear the extent to which they are concrete designs as opposed to suggestive sketches. Perhaps for this reason, the gardener favors photographic evidence, which indubitably shows actual conditions. The second way in which authenticity emerges as a value is in the gardener's desire for Shofuso to reflect a timeless Japanese aesthetic. In her words:

I don't want it to be like "a new twist on the tea garden." I just want it to be an authentic garden. It's not gonna be boring; there will be creativity in it, but I don't want it to be this masterwork of every way you can bend Japanese garden techniques—I want it to be a standard.

What is "standard" and "authentic" in this regard seems to be determined by consensus, both on the level of Shofuso's garden working group, and more broadly on a national level. The gardener describes the North American Japanese Garden Association (NAJGA), established in 2010:

The purpose of NAJGA is to raise awareness of Japanese gardens and really increase the caliber of them and increase authenticity and increase education. The idea is that these gardens come together and we talk about the standards and then the authenticity across the country improves.

All in all, it can be said that authenticity as Shofuso's truth-to-self guided information seeking, while authenticity as timeless Japanese aesthetic guided information outcomes.

Education as a value emerges from Shofuso's very roots. The gardener recalls that one of the reasons that Philadelphia was chosen as the permanent home for Shofuso was the rallying of John D. Rockefeller, who wanted to keep an exemplar of Japanese architecture on the East Coast for its educational value. Education continues to motivate Shofuso's offerings, and thus it is unsurprising that it likewise underlies garden decisions.

Authenticity and education are intertwined in the gardener's document work. The gardener describes Shofuso as a platform for educating the public on authentic Japanese garden elements as well as the history of Philadelphia and Japan. This interplay is seen clearly in a discussion regarding bamboo fencing as a specific suggestion in the comprehensive garden plan. First, in the Tansai Sano garden diagram, which is meant to guide the garden's design, an unlabeled divider outlines the courtyard garden. According to Japanese aesthetic, courtyard gardens should be enclosed. However, because the divider in the plan is unlabeled, it is unclear how it "ought" to be. In reading a biography of Tansai Sano, the gardener learned that the Sano family was known for their skill in making bamboo

fencing. Moreover, bamboo fencing is a common element in Japanese gardening, and Shofuso currently does not have an example of it. Based on all this, the gardener has suggested that a bamboo fence be implemented as the divider in the courtyard garden, serving simultaneously as adherence to the canonical Tansai Sano plan, a nod to the Sano lineage, an exemplar of timeless Japanese aesthetic and an educational tool for the Philadelphian public.

Reducing ambiguity is a third value in the head gardener's document work. As described above, the details of Shofuso's historical implementation are not entirely clear, which results in problems. For instance, the garden working group has decided that the Tansai Sano design is the canonical design for the Shofuso garden. However, there are at least three distinct Tansai Sano designs, which differ slightly, and reconciling these differences has been a challenge. Moreover, it may not be the case that these plans are meant to be taken literally. As evidence, the gardener notes that the plan only shows one layer of foliage, while:

Anyone who knows anything about garden design can see that it's not complete. A garden designer would never design a garden where there's just one row of plants. You have to have some type of dynamic screening.

The gardener describes how discussions in the garden working group often reference the Tansai Sano plan(s) in decision-making, leading to repeated impasse because of their ambiguity. Thus the gardener has sought to reduce this ambiguity by first opting to determine the garden's defining features, based on historical research and consultation with experts. This led to the creation of the document outlining these defining features, which was meant to be the keystone reference for decision making in lieu of the various plans and other documents. The in-progress comprehensive garden plan, in turn, is meant to build on that document and further reduce ambiguity at Shofuso.

Process

The gardener's process of creating the garden plan itself involves three key meta-processes: calling on diverse knowledge, channeling the master, and stepping back.

In her work, the gardener calls on diverse knowledge and information. As she says, her go-to source for information is Shofuso's contracted garden consultant, but she also consults regularly with other Japanese gardening experts to broaden her own perspective. Additionally, she regularly reads *Sukiya Living*, a Japanese design magazine, and sometimes consults an online Japanese gardening forum. In this specific project, the gardener has also consulted Japanese colleagues and various archives. Her accounts of her work demonstrate interpretation and integration of these diverse sources. This process also suffuses her information seeking; as she says, "I file everything away and I pull out the pieces that make sense for me."

Next, the gardener sees her work as channeling the master, both in terms of channeling Tansai Sano, Shofuso's original

landscape architect, and channeling authentic Japanese style. Regarding the former, the gardener expresses a desire to “know” Sano as a designer, and she seeks to “nod” back to Sano in her work. Regarding the latter, many of the gardener’s decisions are based in philosophical principles of Japanese gardening. This comes out, for instance, in her description of intended experience of the tea garden:

The tea garden especially is a place where you want to slow down and be very present in the day. The tea ceremony is all about appreciating the moment that we have now, because you can never get this back. Like us sitting at this table, we’ll never have this again.

Finally, the gardener describes her work as the process of continually “stepping back.” This is related to gardening philosophy, as Japanese gardening demands an attention to detail with a simultaneous eye toward the whole:

You can’t just make a tree beautiful, because then you’ll step back and be like, “Oh, now that tree looks funny.” So when you see a tree you have to prune, what you have to do is step back and be like, “How should I prune it, based on everything else around it?”

This process was inherent in creating the garden plan:

We drilled down and did this area in detail, and then we took a step back, and we’re like, “But what is the area? What is its purpose and what does it function as?” And we decided that this is a path area. It’s not a tea garden, it’s not a—I don’t know. It’s literally just a pathway area.

Challenges

Several challenges punctuate the document work of the gardener, including *organizational* and *historical* hurdles.

Organizational challenges emerge in two main ways in the gardener’s accounts of her work. First, there has been some disagreement regarding the interpretation of the Tansai Sano plan(s) and other historical materials, reflective of the classic antithesis between the letter and spirit of the law. Challenges also stem from competing priorities, in part reflective of an ongoing struggle at Shofuso to balance attention to both the house and the garden.

Historical challenges include the frustration in working with ambiguous documents, intimated above, as well as a sense of being overwhelmed with the amount of irrelevant information available. This latter challenge, noticeably, compelled the gardener to be surgical in her information seeking, ignoring the “interesting but not relevant” information she came across. Frustration also emerged in determining the trustworthiness of historical documents she encountered. The gardener notes that some documents testify to information that she knows to be false:

I think that a lot of that false historicism has already made it into print. Like there is this rumor that the dome of Memorial Hall is supposed to be an intended view, like from the veranda you’re supposed to see that through the

trees. But there’s no evidence of that, and I don’t think that has ever been an intention. It even says that in our historic register, and it aggravates me because it’s just not true. And when you look at the reference in our Philadelphia historic register, because it’s a document that has citations, it says “personal interview.” And it’s like, that’s just not true. So that scares me.

In sum, these challenging realities of historical and organizational work come to the fore at certain points in the process of the gardener’s document work, but they do not seem to be as pervasive as the foundational guiding values.

DISCUSSION

The gardener’s experience of developing the garden plan at Shofuso is richly illustrative of the dynamics of document work. This account gives phenomenological color to processes that previous research has only characterized from a social-group perspective. As described above, this experience can be seen as a set of organization-influenced foundational principles that underlie work processes which are punctuated by challenges, but it must be understood that all these elements are interwoven in a complex way. This demonstrates the principle of social complexity (Frohmann, 2012) that characterizes documentality. Indeed, documents are seen to bind Shofuso as an organization in unexpected ways. For instance, the Tansai Sano plan was selected as the document to be referred to in maintaining Shofuso’s historicity; but as the gardener’s account illustrates, this is not a straightforward matter.

Like social complexity, Frohmann’s (2012) other facets of documentality show through in this analysis. Particularly salient is the issue of historicity: Each of the documents that the gardener has consulted has its own history, and the gardener has had to interpret and reconcile these competing and sometimes ambiguous histories in the creation of the master garden plan. The foundational value of authenticity has guided this process, leading the gardener to attempt to transcend history in her work in pursuit of timelessness—which may be understood as a struggle to escape historicity altogether. This runs counter to the general trend in historical garden restoration, which is to preserve a garden at a particular historical period (Elliott, 2010)—generally, its most “significant” one, which, surely, is potentially contentious. But of course, the notion and definition of timelessness is, itself, historically situated. To this end, the gardener recognizes that the master garden plan is not once-and-for-all, but rather will be a living, evolving document. This study also adds further color to the notion of documental historicity in light of the gardener’s concerns regarding the crystallization of false history in documents. This begs the question: What analytical tools does the lay-documentalist have to discern the “true” from the “false”? Further research, it seems, would do well to develop and disseminate such tools.

The final two aspects of documentality—functionality and autonomous agency—were also evidenced. Functionality is

seen clearly in the way documents organize the gardening roles at Shofuso. For instance, the Tansai Sano plan—a document—was the axis around which roles and decisions at Shofuso cohered, and these roles and decisions continued to be moderated in light of newly discovered documents. These documents, then, demonstrate autonomous agency in their ability to affect the course of human action and emotion, seemingly by their mere presence.

In addition to supporting and exemplifying Frohmann's (2012) discussion of documentality, this study has other implications for document theory and research. First, it presents an analysis of documents-in-use and document creation, whereas much of the neo-documentalist literature analyzes fixed documents. Further, this study demonstrates the feasibility of researching document work from the perspective of the lived experience of the individual—and in particular through hermeneutic phenomenology. Highlighting the processes at play for each individual in document work can offer further nuance to our understanding of document work as a social phenomenon. Concretely, this work has begun to develop a framework for investigating the experience of document work, which includes *foundation*, *process* and *challenges*. This invites further research on the experience of document work in other settings to validate and extend this framework.

This work also has a number of implications for practitioners and designers. For gardeners, it demonstrates the inextricable nature of documentation in their work. For historic landscape gardeners in particular, it shows the importance of documenting decisions and implementations, with clarity, for posterity. More, this work calls for research into improving practice in historical documentation in general; it demonstrates, for one, the value of photography in cultural heritage preservation work (see also Yilmaz, Yakar, Gulec, & Dulgerler, 2007). This observation invites the consideration of designers of information systems to support photography as an accessible means of historical documentation. For instance, virtually all guests at Shofuso take photos during their visits—what if these photos could be leveraged by future historians and gardeners to ascertain the evolution of the garden? Modern and emerging information technologies surely present a bounty of possibilities in this regard.

CONCLUSION

This study approached document work from the perspective of an individual's lived experience—in this case a gardener at a historical landscape site—through an in-depth case study. The findings of this study shed light on the complex processes underlying document work in this setting, gesturing toward a framework for further analysis of the experience of document work in other settings. The experiential aspect of human engagement with information—unfolding in the lifeworld—has long been overlooked, but has begun to see attention in recent years. This study has shown how such research can be fruitful for

both practice and theory, contributing to the ultimate aim of information science, which seeks to employ information technology for enhancing lives.

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