Cultural Handbag Paper

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srfc:Darj,Vgan,R6,snObOrd,UU,AEPi,PlaySt8ion,GNU/Linux;

deep:Dad,Bible,dreidel,hockey,Kuromi,chS,Qbix,GPK,BBcRd,UMD,Ryu,LakaiSk8,dubstep;

Every individual possesses a unique blend of culture which shapes their entire perspective. Cultural competence is essential for Peer Specialist work as it enables us to adequately learn sensitivity and adapt to cultural norms that differ from our own in order to help others in a way that is fully respectful and beneficial to them. Becoming acutely aware of our own culture and biases is essential to comprehending distinctions from others.

I approached this assignment pragmatically and a little peculiarly. Since we are using an actual bag and presenting the result to our class, I decided to exclusively print out images representing my surface culture to tape to the outside of the bag but the inside is filled entirely with objects signifying my deep culture which are intended to be passed around. Since we probably won't be leaving the bag with our instructors and are likely to be graded primarily on whatever is memorable from our in-class presentation and the submission of this paper, I have decided to include a relatively brief description of each piece of my included culture (which means that I am quite likely to exceed the 3-page length limit and may be penalized for doing so, but I consider that risk worthwhile in the name of thoroughness).

Surface Culture:

\* Darj: Darjeeling is my beloved cat. I have had her for a few years and she has been a wonderfully loving companion. She is all black (like the tea she was named after). Her right ear tip has been snipped off because she was a stray in Madison, Wisconsin (where my sister found her before giving her to me). In Madison, they trap, fix, and then release stray animals. They cut their ears to easily detect which ones have already been fixed. Darj is the sweetest purr-monster with a little kind of raspy “mrrreow” voice. I adore her.

\* Vgan: I have kept mostly Kosher and vegetarian for much of my life and a few years ago I started trying to constrain my diet to vegan “cruelty free” foods. I still occasionally eat some cheese or ice cream (this being Wisconsin and all) but tend to avoid any animal or insect products (including eggs and honey) when I am at liberty to purchase my own groceries.

\* R6: In California, I owned two different 2005 Yamaha YZF-R6 motorcycles which I heartily enjoyed racing around on freeways and race tracks. I lost one of them to unaffordable impounding fees after Highway Patrol clocked me going 156 miles-per-hour. I think my motorcycling days might be behind me, but I still remember the thrills fondly.

\* snObOrd: I have enjoyed snowboarding fast and taking big jumps throughout much of my adulthood. I used to go snowboarding frequently almost every season in California but have only been to Rib Mountain a handful of times since moving to Wisconsin in 2010.

\* UU: I have found a spiritual home in the Fox Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (where my mom, Dottie Mathews, was the Assistant Minister for several years).

\* AEPi: I am a brother of the Alpha Epsilon Pi international Jewish fraternity, Zeta Tau chapter (from the University of California at Irvine where I attended college). I haven't attended any events or even had much contact with my brothers since moving to Wisconsin. I would probably enjoy participating in alumni events and even rush if I become able to return to Southern California again someday.

\* PlaySt8ion: I was a professional Tools Programmer and Gameplay Designer for several Sony PlayStation video game projects back in California. PlayStation shares my initials and has consistently been my preferred video game platform.

\* GNU/Linux: Ever since I attended UCI in the late 1990's, I have strongly preferred GNU/Linux (ahead of any Microsoft Windows or Apple MacOS) operating systems for all computers I have had control over.

Deep Culture:

\* Dad: My father, Gerry Stuart, has had a profound impact on my entire life (maybe especially so for the periods when he has remained absent). He continues to write me letters with some regularity and I attempt to at least e-mail him every year on his birthday to let him know a bit about how I am doing.

\* Bible: I have included a rather unique Hebrew translation of the New Testament (called the Brit HaChadashah) which I acquired when I was a Messianic Jew.

\* dreidel: This is a Jewish toy which is typically played with around Chanukkah.

\* Kuromi: This is a SanRio character which I have always had a particular affinity for. I have included her cute key-holder.

\* hockey: My dad used to take me to hockey games when I was a child and I have always enjoyed watching the sport (even though I have never learned to ice skate particularly well). I haven't been able to attend or watch televised versions of many games in my adulthood, but those I have been able to see were pretty fun.

\* chS: I am pretty sure my father taught me how to play Chess at a very young age but I never took the game very seriously until I came to Wisconsin. Late in 2013, I started writing my own Chess software which I hope to eventually develop to have a sufficient number of features to sell on mobile platforms and maybe supplement my Disability and CPS income.

\* Qbix: I learned how to solve Rubik's Cubes (and my spoonerism for them is pronounced “kyoo-bix”) and have written several software versions over the years.

\* GPK && BBcRd: Garbage Pail Kids and BaseBall cards I have kept collections of.

\* UMD: Sony's PlayStationPortable media format which I developed Death, Jr. for.

\* Ryu: The PlayStation2 StreetFighter controller I am very fond of.

\* LakaiSk8: My favorite skateboard shoe company.

\* dubstep: My favorite music genre.