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Reflective Postscript

Working on the commentary project led me to investigate an aspect of my topic I had not previously considered, so the results of that work were necessarily insights new to me. I had not previously had a point of view regarding my topic as approached from the angle I chose; I had not previously regarded Legend of the Five Rings (L5R) through the lens of cultural appropriation / appreciation. Insofar as forming a point of view reflects a change, then, my view of the matter changed.

Additionally, while I am not in the position that most who take the class are with regard to academic and documentary research, I did find it useful to walk through the process my students are expected to follow in their own work. Having the embedded experience has helped me better understand the demands placed on my students, and the practice in research is useful to me as I continue my own work in other areas.

As far as contributing to public discourse about the topic goes, I've noted that there is relatively little work done on L5R; consequently, most any work on it is a new contribution. Aside from journals that take brief essays, though, or the blog where I posted my work so that students can see it, I am not certain there is any place for me to submit that work. The blog seems venue enough, however; I am confident that students will continue to look at it as long as they are asked to do the assignments mimicked therein.

I did not receive much feedback, if any, from my readers. The occasional comment that the examples were helpful was all. As such, I was not able to make any adjustments to my work based on the feedback.

That said, I was in position to offer feedback to my students. In class and in online discussions, I worked to help them clarify their expressed thinking and adhere to the guidelines set forth for them; in doing so, I was exposed to a divergence of opinion I found refreshing. In my current position, I get to work with students who come into the class with a wealth of outside experience far different from my own. Having access to that experience through my students has been illuminating, time and again, though I could wish I did not have to work so hard to get them to express that experience.

Access to others' experience did not translate into access to new writing strategies, however. Classroom and other discussion did not indicate much attention to writing as a process, reflecting earlier instruction that has positioned writing as a one-off activity. Given the course, this is not unexpected; the expected flow of strategies is from instructor to student, rather than the reverse. This is not to say that students have nothing to teach—rather the opposite is true, as noted above and true besides—but that the work of the course does not usually conduce to other patterns. Still, I nurture the hope that I have been helpful, both in my examples and in discussions.