

Sociology observation assignment



OBSERVATION ONE: Young boy and young girl are riding their bikes outside in the cul-de-sac of the neighborhood. The boy is wearing a helmet decal with flames and his bike is black. The girl is wearing a purple helmet with a unicorn horn attached to the front and glitter stickers on it and her bike is bright pink with tassles. The young boy is riding ahead, clearly holding the dominant role in the make-believe game they're playing. They seem oblivious to the world of reality around them as they cut through people's front yards and swerve around trees. It's becoming more and more apparent that they are playing a game of war as the boy shouts out orders you would hear on a battlefield. (" Hold your ground!" and " The enemy is coming over the ridge in the distance! Go get help!")

The young boy is fighting off a horde of bloodthirsty Orcs while the young girl is riding away to fetch help from their pretend legion. From the dialogue going on between the two, it seems they are both soldiers fighting to save their homeland of Rohan. In this case, it seems that gender doesn't have an effect on how the boy interacts with the girl. However, the girl seems aware of the fact that she is a girl and her role in this sort of pretend play is to be a damsel in distress and not a warrior fighting for her country, so repeatedly falling down and crying out for help and screeching that the enemy has captured her is a normality.

OBSERVATION TWO: At the coffee shop in Jackson, two young men are sitting in a corner secluded from other customers in the lobby. What's odd is they both have coffee, but neither of them seem interested in drinking it. The blonde (we'll call him Blondie) has a clear role of authority over the other (we'll call him Nugent). Their seclusion from the rest of the restaurant

doesn't seem to be noticed by anyone else in the shop. Blondie is bent over the table, leaning towards Nugent, speaking urgently in a low voice, not wanting to be overheard. Nugent seems in tune to what Blondie has to say, but his face shows doubt.

After Blondie finishes speaking, Nugent takes a moment to respond, deciding what would be best to say. Nugent's choice of words was the wrong one because Blondie bursts out with " I'm the older brother therefore what I say goes!". This outburst causes some heads to turn in their direction, making both shift uncomfortably and smile sheepishly to the onlookers. When the people have gone back to their coffee and papers, Nugent gives Blondie a look of nonverbal warning, possibly about keeping it down and not calling attention to themselves anymore.

OBSERVATION THREE (observation two cont.): As time passes, it becomes clear that Blondie and Nugent are brothers, with no nuclear family to speak of. Blondie has had the role of being the leader since they were young and Nugent has followed him obediently. Being the younger of the two, Nugent has learned to be charismatic and to be the peacemaker. This is shown when a barista goes over to their table to see if everything is as it should be. Blondie makes no eye contact with the barista, hunches over his coffee cup (almost in an animalistic, territorial, " this is mine, don't touch it" sort of way. Perhaps a learned behavior from a time when he was young and resources may have been scarce in the house of residence), and shrinks into the corner, not saying a word to the barista or Nugent. Nugent, however, makes eye contact with her, leans toward her (making himself seem to be an active recipient to what she has to say), and smiles openly.

He replies to her acquisition with a lighthearted laugh and soft-spoken words of reassurance. When she walks away, Blondie comes back from his hunched over state and Nugent sighs deeply and leans back against his chair heavily (makes one think that perhaps Nugent has had to use his talent of peacemaking to cover for his brother throughout their lives). They go back to their quiet conversation, but this time Nugent is the speaker and Blondie is the listener. Whatever it is that Nugent has said has defused Blondie's angst and revealed his true emotions because Blondie breaks eye contact with Nugent, his face softens, and a tear falls onto the lid of his coffee cup. Blondie quickly recovers with a gruff cough and both sit in silence for a moment before getting up, throwing away their untouched coffee, and leaving the shop.

OBSERVATION FOUR: Gibson is a 17-month-old toddler who is discovering which behaviors will get him what. During bath time, he is interested in filling up and pouring out water from his small blue cup while he takes his bath. He does this repeatedly, never tiring of it. Occasionally, he looks up to his father, Mitch, and smiles through his pacifier with a small giggle (Gibson has learned that smiling at someone can be used as a form of seeking approval from a superior). The faucet is almost a thing of homage as the water shoots out over his hands and splashes onto his chest and face. Gibson finds a second, SEC-branded cup sitting on the bathtub ledge and begins the task of filling up the small blue cup with water from the faucet, pouring it out into the SEC cup and attempting to drink the water in the SEC cup (all he accomplishes is dumping the water all over his face).

After awhile of this play, he tosses both cups out of the bathtub and begins grunting and reaching out for Mitch, signaling that he is done with his bath and wants to get out. As Mitch grabs a towel, Gibson stands up in anticipation of being picked up out of the water and dried off. Mitch carries Gibson to the nursery, dresses him for bed and brings him out to the main part of the house. Gibson has learned that this is the time when he is given medicine, something he isn't fond of, so Gibson struggles against Mitch's arms holds out one hand in front of his face, signaling " no, I do not want that". However, this action is moot. After taking his medicine, Gibson waves to me (his way of saying " goodnight") and goes back to his nursery for the remainder of the night.

OBSERVATION FIVE: A young man, probably 19-22 years old, and a young woman around the same age are walking down the sidewalk, discussing something interesting to the girl but not so much to the boy. He seems more interested in her hand that is swinging freely at her side, slightly grazing his own. It can be clearly seen that they have known one another for quite some time by how close they stand next to one another. Every now and again he nods and says a word or two, making sure to look engaged in their conversation. She seems oblivious to how he keeps glancing down at her hand, clearly wanting to hold it.

They stop at a crosswalk, and he moves his hand as if in an attempt to hold hers, but stops himself and instead puts his hand in his jacket pocket and looks down at his shoes. She looks at him and it is clear that she, too, wanted him to take her hand. Her eyes search his face for a moment before he looks back up, causing her to look away quickly, not wanting to be

caught. They continue their walk across the street and the girl slows her pace ever so slightly, falling behind the boy. She stops for a moment, and then gasps loudly and throws herself forward, catching herself on his arm. Startled, the boy grabs her hand and steadies her to keep her from “ falling”. They cross to the other sidewalk, and neither one has let go of the other’s hand. The girl is smiling quietly as she listens to the boy talk animatedly about a new topic, disappearing from my line of sight.