

Assignment #3 Observation 1

Word count: 933

Place: Forman Park, Syracuse NY

Time of the observation: 11:08 AM–11:24 AM

Date: September 24, 2017 (Sunday)

The observer: a 28-year old white male doctoral student

The observed: white middle-aged man and woman

Case: man and woman in the park

- 1. Who?** I sat on a bench in a circle-like area around the fountain in the Forman Park opposite a white man and woman in their mid-thirties. They took notice of me. I pretend to text to my friends.
- 2. How long here?** The man and woman have been sitting in the park for at least 5 minutes; it took me 5 minutes to get to the park after I saw them in the distance. No one came into the park or left it while I was walking.
- 3. Relationship?** The man and woman are sitting in close proximity, which means they are either a couple or siblings. In the next 16 minutes, the woman will gently touch the man's arm two times—it suggests that they *are* a couple; most probably married for more than a year. Assumption: people do not engage in romantic touching in the later stages of their relationships or marriage.
- 4. Looks?** The man is in a good physical shape and toned, while the woman is less so.
 - 4.1** The man wears a green T-shirt, shorts, lightweight sneakers, and watches on the left wrist that look like Apple Watch which, by the way, costs at least \$330.
 - 4.2** The woman wears a black T-shirt, shorts, and flip-flops (not good for long walks). The woman keeps looking and scratching her right arm (she hit it? insect bite? no bruises noticed).
- 5. Belongings?** No belongings (e.g., backpack, purse, caps, phones) noticed. Perhaps those are in their car nearby or in one of the two hotels. The man most probably has an Apple Watch, because it also acts as a phone, so he doesn't need to have the phone handy. So, it's at least a middle-class family or perhaps upper middle class (they have car or stay in an expensive hotel, the guy has Apple Watch).
- 6. What's peculiar?** The man and woman each sip coffee from two white standard cups. There is no logo on the cups; hence, they are not from Kubal, Recess, Starbucks, or Dunkin' Donuts. They got coffee from one of the hotels—either Crowne Plaza or Parkview Hotel.
- 7. Interaction with each other?** The man and woman clearly have a conversation, but I am too far to hear what they are talking about, plus the fountain noise makes it impossible to hear anything behind it. It seems like a lazy conversation, just an exchange of phrases once in a while.
- 8. Am I creepy?** I may well look creepy for them. They look at me sometimes, I look at them. They notice I am watching. Perhaps they think that I'm this weird guy in a pink T-shirt who came to the park to play with the phone and look at them.

9. **Activity?** The man and woman are relaxed and lean on the back of the bench. No sign of rush or hurry. The woman sits with her legs spread, the guy has his legs crossed. The woman occupies a lot of space, the man is more reserved. Is she more dominant in the relationship? Are they just tired? If tired, why tired in the morning? The guy stands up and walks to the fake binoculars that are in the Forman Park. The woman remains sitting. It is his first time in this park, or else why would he look at the binoculars if he had done so before? Is it extreme boredom? The man then sits back on the bench, then the woman stands up and does the same binocular thing. Does she reflect the guy's behavior? Is she also bored? Or does she mirror the actions of her significant other? But why not at the same time? They have certainly been married for more than a year.

10. **Why do I see what I see?** They probably had just had brunch and feel sleepy; plus, they are having coffee—something that can go either with the food or after the food. But why did they have brunch right before 11:00 AM (isn't it kind of late)? Did they sleep longer on Sunday? Why, what happened yesterday? Did they go to see Paul McCartney's concert? They may have. It may explain a lot. So, they *are* staying at a hotel and are ready to leave soon (Monday is a working day, checkout is at 12:00 PM at the Crowne Plaza or the Parkview Hotel—they have 38 minutes left).

HYPOTHESIS: The white man and woman, who are a middle-class married couple of more than a year of (a happy?) marriage, came to Syracuse. They stayed in a hotel with the view of the Forman Park for the first time. They probably went to the concert of Paul McCartney the night before in the Carrier Dome. They woke up relatively late on Sunday morning and had a late brunch in the hotel. Then they went out for a 20–30 minute relaxation in the park with a coffee from the hotel to sit, chat, and get some fresh air. They will soon leave Syracuse, so there is no time (or necessity) to explore the city but just enough time to sit in the park (and notice the creepy guy, a.k.a. me).

P.S. 11. **Final test?** They finally stand up at 11:22 and slowly (sleepy after food?) move out from the park. I am watching. I expect them to go to the Crowne Plaza, but they may well just sit in a car. They cross the street and walk into the Crowne Plaza door. They did not hold hands, so clearly married for more than a year.



Picture. The picture of the bench on which the couple was sitting. I was sitting on exactly the same type of bench opposite the couple.

Assignment #3 Observation 2

Word count: 899

Place: Modern Malt, 325 S Clinton St, Syracuse, NY 13202

Time of the observation: 08:40 AM–09:16 AM

Date: October 01, 2017 (Sunday)

The observer: a 28-year old white male doctoral student

The observed: white man and woman in their mid-20s

Case: man and woman in a diner

1. **Who?** The white man and woman in their mid-twenties are sitting and talking in a booth near the window in a typical American diner.

2. **Looks?** The woman is wearing a white shirt, blue jeans, and flip-flops. The man is wearing a cap, black long-sleeve shirt “Ohio State Football Team,” jeans, and brown shoes on laces.

2.1 The looks suggest that they came by car: the woman’s flip-flops aren’t best for morning long walks, the man’s shoes aren’t most comfortable for long walks, either.

2.2 The clothes and looks suggest they are most probably middle class people; not students.

3. **How long here?** When I saw them, both people had only water on the table—it means, the food was coming. Because no server attended to them, it meant they had already ordered food and come here some 8–10 minutes before I did.

4. **Interaction with each other?** They are deeply engaged in a conversation, without looking around. The woman often texts something on the phone but continues to respond to the man. While she is texting, the guy is looking at her screen from his seat. The woman mirrors the man’s actions: he yawns then she yawns; he sips water then she sips water. No touching happens throughout the whole observation time period. At some point, she hands the phone over to the man. He looks and responds to her, then gives the phone back. Then he draws something in the air with his hands, which looks like a box. The woman places her left leg under her butt (looks for comfort? the foot got cold?). The guy stands up to use the bathroom, the woman starts texting heavily. The guy comes back, they resume a conversation.

4.1 The act of yawning suggests they are still sleepy (woke up not long ago? did not have enough sleep?)

4.2 The telephone use suggests the man and the woman are in a good and trustworthy relationship, but probably not married—they are too lively and energetic with each other (romantic period?) and she seems to mimic his actions (she likes him more than he likes her?)

5. **Food?** I did not see the man’s food, but the woman got a sandwich. She holds a fork in her left hand while eating, so she is probably left-handed. They are still deeply engaged in a conversation. The woman asks something, the guy nods his head; then the guy asks something, the woman nods her head—they are probably asking each other if each of them like their food. The woman uses her hand to eat parts of a sandwich and does not use a knife at all, which probably suggests middle class manners. The guy is the same: he puts (actually, throws) big chunks of food into his mouth (being masculine and powerful?). A peculiar detail was that he used a napkin to clean his mouth (greasy food? he wants to look good in front of the woman?). Then the guy points at the woman’s food on her plate and says something. They smile. Is he leading in this relationship?

6. What's peculiar? The woman stands up, with her sandwich half-unfinished, says something to the man and leaves through the exit door at 09:03 AM. She did not kiss him (to avoid attention?). The man then quickly finishes his food. Then he takes his phone and browses it. The server comes up and nods his head, apparently, the observed man asks for a bill. The server brings the bill, the man pays it. Then the man stands up at 09:16 AM and leaves through a different exit door. His face seems neutral, not any sign of either joy or sadness. So, they are not married, it was a date. Did they park at different places? Was it purposeful? Is it a secret early morning date?

HYPOTHESIS: The white man and white left-handed woman came in for a date in a diner on a Sunday morning to spend time with each other and have breakfast. (Intuition: they spent a night together). They belong to the middle class, are not students, and are not siblings. They enjoy each other's company, the woman mirrors the man's actions, and they have a lively conversation throughout the breakfast. They have a relationship of trust, because the woman seems comfortable texting in from of the man and the man is comfortable looking at her screen while she is texting. Each has their own car (they did not walk—the shoes on either of them are too uncomfortable for long walks). They do not plan to spend the Sunday together, because they do not leave the place together. The man pays the bill, which may confirm that they are in a romantic relationship; however, she did not kiss him goodbye and she leaves without finishing her sandwich, which seems unexpected. Why so? Two alternatives:

- (1) The woman gets a text message that urgently asks her to come some place else, so she jumps to leave and the man has no other choice than to accept that.
- (2) They are lovers, and each has a partner, so they secretly date on early Sunday mornings in a neutral place such as a diner and deliberately do not exhibit physical fondness of each other. Hence, she leaves earlier through one door, he leaves 12 minutes later through the other door.



Picture. This is the couple I observed on Sunday morning during breakfast. The distance did not allow eavesdropping, but it was good enough for a detailed observation.