

Ethnography #2
Scott Arensman

I arrived at Juniper Valley Park on a Sunday evening around 7pm. The park was full of kids and adults alike, and I proceeded to sit on one of the benches that surrounded the main play area. The first observation that I made was the amount of ethnic differences in the children at play. However, the children did not seem at all bothered with the difference. I watched on several occasions the meeting, interaction, and playing of children who were totally different from each other in both appearance and heart language. Children did not see those boundaries and it was refreshing to watch. I stopped and asked myself if I behaved like these children on a daily basis. If I answered honestly, I found that I am not that accepting of all people. Around me sat the adults of the children playing. The diversity was as vast as the children playing. The difference is there was no interaction between the people. The adults only communicated with their children or other adults of the same ethnic origin. It would be interesting to study at what age we are no longer willing to pursue relationship with others different with ourselves.

There was an equal mix of male to female adults. Upon observation the males were up and doing more with the children than the females. Many brought their dogs to the park with them. I made a simple observation that most of them were not large dogs. I guess this is due to the fact that space is limited and larger animals need more room. A few of the children rode motorized power wheels type of vehicles or scooters, but most were running. I am amazed that the children are in such good physical health compared to the children of the south. I saw no child overweight or out of shape. Playgrounds in the South do not render the same observations.

The Asian lady sitting two people down from me was constantly screaming at her children to do something. I cannot say what since the language was not known to me. The Germanic lady said very little and sat quietly and watched. A Scandinavian sounding father became upset with his little girl when she walked down to the Asian lady, who was with her little girl eating goldfish crackers, and asked for a cracker. The funny thing is the father had just told the child he would not buy her anything from the ice cream truck, and she was doing what she thought the next best thing. The Asian child was more than willing to share and the duo seemed happy with the outcome. The father yelled at his little girl and when the Asian girl brought her more she declined. The father soon took her to get ice cream. Would I react the same way? Why would this provoke anger in the father? These are questions that I will ponder.

I left the park at dark and was surprised at how many were still there. It was a good night for an observation and to reflect upon myself.