Toy Story Observation Assignment

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**Introduction**

Growing up as a boy, the society around me has always had a certain expectation of how I am supposed to be, how I should talk or how I should lead my life. It is unfortunate that as soon as a child is born, gender is assigned and the baby is expected to grow and morph in light of the expected gender role. Something that I see all over social media and television is the fact that boys will be boys and girls will be girly. The society expects my gender, "male" to be masculine and generally stronger. There are certain stereotypes that have been created by society and an individual is expected to work in accordance with it. A male is said to be the pursuer, the breadwinner and someone who has to always be physically stronger. I find this to be sexist and unfair. Growing up I was always told that boys do not cry. Why cannot men cry? Men are human too and feel every emotion like any other gender. Additionally, there have been times that I have wanted to take part in activities that have been deemed more feminine by society, like ballet. However, I have always felt hindered by what people will say (Price & Tayler, 2016). There have also been times when I have seen that my gender has been given preference for certain activities, for instance, sports. Additionally, gender roles may differ with regard to race and ethnicity. I have an Indian friend, and when I look at her culture there is still significant discrimination in regards to gender. Through this paper, I will be discussing the relation amid gender and society via examples.

**Discussion**

I will be further reflecting on the connection amid gender and society by talking about my experience in a toy shop. I best believe that when a person goes out to buy products and services that is when the relationship between society and gender role can be best understood. For better understanding, I decided to go to a toy store. The reason why I chose a place which targets children is to see how society is conditioning children to behave in a certain manner. the first thing that I noticed upon entering the store is the fact that ambience was neutral in the beginning. It looked like a regular toy store that we have all visited in our childhood, but the difference this time was that I was more observant towards my surroundings.

The first thing that the salesperson asked me if I needed a toy for a girl or a boy. This struck me in a manner that I never thought it could, we are conditioning children to act a certain way from a very young age, which is saddening. When I said that I wanted to look at both the boy and girl toys, I became more astonished to see how the society and manufacturers function. For starters, there was a separate section for both the genders. The girl section was pink or purple and the boy section had more blue, black or red kind of colors.

When I looked at the toys, there was a clear difference between the toys that were targeted for the girls and boys. The boy toys were inclusive of cars, action figures, construction tools, animal stuff toys, swords and so on. On the contrary, the girl toys consisted of dolls, kitchen sets, doll houses, unicorns and pretty much stereotypical figures that one would expect a girl to play with (Price & Tayler, 2016). When I asked if there were any gender-neutral toys, the salesperson showed me some stuffed animals and a few things. In short, there were not many toys which they thought both the genders can play with.

I saw a toy which was specifically targeted for boys, a toy sports car. It had a red packaging with an animated white male with a muscular body in a racing costume on it. The toy car had a remote control and came in two colors of red and green. The tag line was “for the future speedy hunk.” Further, the back of the carton said that the toy will help your child and his friend have a super time without going to the amusement park.

On the contrary, for girls, there was a toy doll house. It was pink in color, had family figurines of a mother, father and two siblings. The house had a kitchen, rooms, bathrooms and all the necessities a house has. The mother figurine was wearing an apron, the father a suit, supposed sister in a pink dress and the brother in a blue and all of them were white in color. The box said, the perfect family and claimed that it will help your daughter and her friends have the “perfect time” functioning a family of their own.

**Conclusion**

After looking at both the gender-specific toys I came to the decision that I would never purchase such stereotypical toys for children. They are conditioning them to act in a certain manner and acknowledge a particular ethnicity (Price & Tayler, 2016). I did not like how the dollhouse was created to train young girls on how to raise a family. Further, the car was specifically targeted for men in a very masculine manner, which I did not appreciate. What I despised the most was the lack of color in figurines and dolls. I think that toys should be more gender-neutral, have more ethnical representation. The purpose of toys should be to teach a child to be more productive, considerate and inclusive while they have fun. They should not be a stereotype to instill gender roles. If I created those toys I would tone down the color scheme, change the packaging and outfits of the figurines, make them more color diverse and target them towards all genders and ethnicities. Toys should be of all colors, as like people.

**References**

Price, D., & Tayler, K. (2016). *Gender diversity and inclusion in early years education*. Routledge.