#4.b - OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT – 5 points

Minimum word requirement: **500 words**

*(revised 09-17-14)*

**PURPOSE:** Having read ‘Night Mother, we notice that there are certain ways & mannerisms that can be observed as people are engaged in normal conversation. The purpose of this assignment is to increase your awareness of the mannerisms and “physicalizations” that take place during an ordinary & believable conversation.

**PROCEDURE:** Find a place where you can conveniently sit and observe a conversation going on between at least 2 people. Sit there for at least 20 minutes, and casually make notes to yourself. *(Be careful not to be seen as a stalker, so be tactful and non-obtrusive.)* Put enough distance between you & your “characters” so that you **CANNOT HEAR** the dialogue. The point of this assignment is notice the actions that occur and how your “characters” relate to their setting. The 500 word requirement refers to the number of words needed to depict the scene and explain the scene.

**DO NOT WRITE DIALOGUE FOR YOUR CHARACTERS,** but include the following theatrical conventions.

**THE FOLLOWING THEATRICAL CONVENTIONS MUST BE CONSIDERED AND BE PART OF YOUR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT:**

- **SETTING THE SCENE** - similar to ‘NIGHT MOTHER sample below

- **STAGE DIRECTIONS (beginning of scene):** – this is similar to the “Crafting a Play” assignment, but this time you are noting the setting when you first encounter your characters.

- **DIRECTIONS/SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTORS** – this is also similar to the “Crafting a Play” assignment, but this time you are merely observing the activities and the manner in which your characters relate to the setting and to each other. You are merely observing the normal activities or **BLOCKING** for the characters, and you will put this in a narrative form and NOT combined with text (as in ‘NIGHT MOTHER below.)

- **PROPERTY & SET PIECE LIST** - list of props used by the characters. This should include chairs, tables, etc. This helps to create a “Set Design” for your observation as well as a list of hand props.
Once again, use the following excerpts from ‘NIGHT MOTHER as examples of items in your Observation:

THE SCENE/AUTHOR’S NOTE: The time is the present, with the action beginning about 8:15. Clocks onstage in the kitchen and on a table in the living room should run throughout the performance and be visible by the audient.

The play takes place in a relatively new house built way out a country road, with a living room and connecting kitchen and a center hall that leads off to the bedrooms. A pull cord…

STAGE DIRECTIONS (beginning of scene): Mama hums some odd little tune as she stretches reach the cupcakes in a cabinet in the kitchen. She can’t see them, but she can feel around for them, and she’s eager to have one, so she’s working pretty hard at it. This may be…

STAGE DIRECTIONS (during scene): DO NOT WRITE DIALOGUE FOR YOUR CHARACTERS...

- MAMA: [Unwrapping the cupcake.] Jessie, it’s the last snowball, sugar.
- JESSIE: [Holding a towel that was on the stack of newspapers.] Towels you don’t want any more. (And picking up Mama’s snowball wrapper.) How about this swimming towel…

PROPERTY PLOT/LIST:

KITCHEN

- Percolator
- Spices & spice rack
- Hand lotion
- Dish soap
- Paper towels & rack
- Dish drainer