PSYC 105: INTRO TO PSYCH I

PSYC 106: INTRO TO PSYCH II

GLOBAL ASSIGNMENT

This assignment is adapted from a paper by Pawel Boski (2012), of the Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities. It will ask you to read (or listen to, if someone reads it to you) a fictionalized account of the first day of the visit of “Bill Morgan” to Warsaw, Poland. After you read it, consider the following questions, and discuss your responses with classmates.

1 . Imagine you were Bill Morgan on his visit to Poland.

A. What would surprise you most there?

B. What would you like or dislike?

C. What aspects of what you found would make you curious to learn more about Polish culture?

2. Having read “One Day in Bill Morgan's Life,” can you imagine a visitor’s first day in Monmouth County, arriving from Warsaw, Poland? Try to imagine how the Polish visitor would feel in some of typically American situations he would encounter with your family in Monmouth County.

A. Can you write the visitor’s story?

B. How does your Polish visitor’s story differ from “One Day in Bill Morgan's Life”?

**Reading:**

***One Day in the Life of Bill Morgan***

It is a Sunday morning. A Delta airplane from Frankfurt has just landed at Warsaw’s Okęcie

airport. Dr. Bill Morgan’s visit to Poland is about to begin. He is coming as an academic

teacher and business consultant, invited by a colleague he met last year at a conference in Boston--Dr. Piotr Chrząszczewski--whose name Dr. Morgan can neither pronounce nor memorize.

Dr. Morgan was excited on his first visit to Poland, and indeed to this part of the world,

Eastern Europe. He was also somewhat worried. In some brief e-mail exchanges during the preceding weeks, he was asked to prepare a couple of lectures on marketing techniques as well as workshop demonstrations on business games. Yet, he did not receive any precise schedule to follow during his visit to Warsaw and therefore he could not tell how his time would be spent the next four days.

As he exited the restricted (customs) area of the airport’s international terminal border, Bill noticed Piotr Chrząszczewski waving to him. His Polish host opened his arms in a broad embrace. An attractive lady next to Piotr smiled and offered Bill flowers, which made Bill a bit

embarrassed. “My wife Danuta – Dr. Morgan” - Chrząszczewski was trying to introduce the

two formally. “Bill. Just call me Bill,” Morgan corrected. “Oh, that’s like Clinton,” Danuta

remarked, while her husband gave a nod to a young man standing beside him, and the son

jumped ready to carry Bill’s large suitcase. “Oh no, that’s not necessary,” he muttered in

protest, but young Chrząszczewski already had it in his grasp and was rolling his suitcase

outside the exit door.

Chrząszczewski’s car was parked just at the curb, next to some taxis, limousines

and city buses. Bill saw a policeman watching them and writing down the license plate numbers of the car. When Piotr Chrząszczewski was about to open the car, the policeman

approached, and an animated conversation began. Mr. Chrząszczewski punctuated his

words with wide hand movements, pointing out to his guest. His wife joined, in an effort to

persuade the policeman, who finally yielded to their pressure. He said in

English, “Good Morning,” saluted and went away.

Mrs. Chrząszczewski took the driver’s seat. Piotr sighed with relief and said: “Well,

you know, it didn’t make sense to leave the car at the airport parking. We just stopped for

10 minutes to pick you up. And, in Poland, when you give the policeman a reasonable

excuse, like ‘I am just waiting for an important foreign visitor,’ he will not hurt you.”

This all looked bizarre to Bill Morgan, and he wondered why did the whole family

come to the airport on Sunday morning to greet him? He wondered if they were going to take him to church for a Catholic service. Bill was a Methodist by family tradition but felt personally indifferent about religion.

Half-jokingly Bill asked, “So, Mrs. Krz… , um, Danuta, are you taking us now to the church?”

Her response long and detailed surprised Bill. “Oh no, not now at least. You see, for us in Poland, Sunday is a working day. I am driving the car, because I am dropping off Piotr to lecture at one of his jobs. He teaches week-end students. And I am a manager at Carrefour, the

French supermarket, where I work on Sundays. Piotr will get out first, then I will get out at Carrefour, and our son Artur will drive you straight to your hotel. We have decided that after you drop your suitcase at your hotel, Artur and his girlfriend Monika, who is a University student of English language and literature, will take you for a tour around Warsaw. Fortunately, the weather is not bad, so you will enjoy the city with your guides.”

Bill found it difficult to follow Danuta Chrząszczewski’s stream of information, and it was not only because she spoke English with a heavy accent. To Bill, the plans sounded complex, involving several different relatives sharing one car. And he wondered why they were treating him like a precious and fragile object, rather than asking him what he wanted to do.

The car stopped at a red light. Piotr Chrząszczewski explained that he would just

jump out because he was already late to his class. “But the students will understand it,

after all, I was at the airport to welcome an international guest. See you in the evening at

our home” – and off he went.

Bill asked Mrs. Chrząszczewski, “Aren’t you afraid of letting your husband leave the car while you are stopped at a red light in heavy traffic?”

“Well, I know,” she said half-apologetically, “but you see, we are so busy all the time. You should realize that Piotr has three full-time jobs. There is a high demand for specialists in business administration and marketing, so we can make it financially, but it is really hard. He is

always on the run. Fortunately, we can catch each other on mobile phones during the day,

otherwise I wouldn’t even know where he is.”

Bill, taken aback, asked, “How come your husband has three full-time jobs? How is possible?”

Mrs. Chrząszczewski smiled, “It is difficult for foreigners to understand. But you know, we must find some ways to catch up with you in the West. We must work even more than Americans do, otherwise the gap between Poland and the West would stay forever. Hey, Artur, wake up, why don't you say anything? Explain it more to Dr. Morgan!” Then she criticized her son’s passiveness.

“Well, Dr. Morgan,” said Artur, “can you imagine sir, that here in Warsaw alone, about 70 new private institutions of higher learning have been opened during the last 15 years?! Many of them rent classrooms from high schools, by the way. My father is teaching now at one of the private schools of business, while I am a student at another. Both are located in state-owned high school buildings. But it all is working somehow: there is a high demand for education among students who can afford to pay for it, professors welcome increased income, and state schools get funds for necessary upgrading. So, finally, it is good for everybody.”

Soon they stopped at a huge shopping plaza, featuring a Carrefour supermarket. “It is good to

work here,” said Mrs. Chrząszczewski, “these supermarkets symbolize a new Poland too. We have six Carrefours here in the capital, and numerous Leclercks, Auchants, Reals, etc. Just like in the West! Besides, I have all best products available in Poland at our home table; you will see

it this evening at the dinner table.” She smiled again, gave a kiss to her son, and left the

car.

Artur Chrząszczewski took the driver’s seat. In few minutes they were at a Holiday Inn,

where Bill checked in. Artur told him that he and his girlfriend would join him in about one

hour for a tour in Łazienki (the Royal Baths) and Wilanów, the royal residence known as Le Petit

Versailles.

Towards the late afternoon, the whole party started regrouping. After their sightseeing tour, Bill was engaged in a lively conversation with Monika, Artur’s girlfriend, while Artur drove. They spoke English and were already planning for Monika to find a summer job in Los Angeles. Artur drove them back to Carrefour, where Mrs. Chrząszczewski, contacted earlier by mobile phone, waited fully loaded with bags of French delicacies. There were varieties of cheese and wine. She had used her 50% employee discount off already low promotion prices. Mrs. Chrząszczewski was telling about her day, half in English and half in Polish.

After giving Monika a motherly kiss, she instructed her on what side dishes Monica should cook for dinner, and how she should prepare them. Then she phoned her mother and asked her how preparations were going on the main dishes for dinner.

“You see,” she explained to Bill, “we are now going home, where my mother is in charge of the dinner. She has been cooking all day and we are now carrying some necessary ingredients for her to finish the main dishes. Monika will help us, she is like our daughter. We need just to pick up Piotr, who’s at another School where he should be finishing class now.”

Then she phoned her husband. “Piotruniu!” she called him (like in English one might call someone name Peter, “Petey!”), “are you done with your students? You better be! That’s enough for today, we are coming to pick you up, be ready in five minutes.”

With traffic, it took them half an hour to reach this second workplace of Piotr. There, from an obscure-looking building, many young people were leaving in small groups. Artur went inside to drag his father out of work. A few minutes later they came down. Mr. Chrząszczewski was surrounded by a group of animated students, apparently not wanting to let him go. They approached the car and continued conversing for several more minutes.

It irritated Danuta, who opened the door and commandingly took her husband’s briefcase. Finally he entered the car, totally exhausted. He squeezed into the backseat of the old Ford Escort with Artur and Monica.

Piotr asked Bill, “How was your day?”, but instead of listening to the American’s response, Piotr himself started complaining about his own hard day.

Half an hour later, they arrived at a new apartment building, where the Chrząszczewski family owned an apartment. The grandmother, a dignified lady in her 70s, opened the door. In the living room the table was set for dinner. Showing their guest around, they spoke proudly of their 100 square meter apartment and how much better it was than their previous apartment in a shabby, Communist-era, “ant-house building,” where they lived until two years ago.

Grandmother, mother, and Monica took charge of kitchen business. Artur’s father told him

to serve the drinks, and also reminded him not to drink because later he would be driving Dr. Morgan back to the hotel.

“So, it is a nice apartment,” Bill agreed. “Quite comfortable for you and your wife, I suppose.”

“Well, not just for us two,” answered Piotr. “Artur, our son, is a student, and he lives with us too. My mother-in-law has a one-room studio of her own, but in fact she spends most of her time here. Since we are so busy, she is the household manager, and often stays here overnight. Finally, Monika should also count as being a member of our household. I see her almost daily, so basically we live as five here. So. To your health and a successful visit!” With that, Mr. Chrząszczewski offered Bill a drink.

Around 8:00 pm, as they were about to approach the table for dinner, the telephone rang. Mr. Chrząszczewski excused himself and went to the other room. It was a business call concerning Bill’s presentation in the morning. It was tentatively planned for 10:00 a.m. the next morning, Monday, but needed to be postponed instead until 1 p.m. Tuesday. The postponement was necessary to accommodate an unexpected, urgent meeting to be held in the conference hall. Chrząszczewski argued for a long time over the telephone until his wife ordered him to hang up and join the company at the table.

The food was plentiful and good. Cold salads and meats came first, along with

herring and pickles. Vodka was served too, and there were toasts “to your health” and “to

friendship.” Next came red beetroot soup with croissants, followed by grandmother’s specialty: duck stuffed with fruits and vegetables. With the duck, the hosts served French Bordeaux red wine, which Danuta had proudly brought from Carrefour. His hosts always served Bill first and often asked him to eat more. His faint excuses--“Thank you, I am fine”--they disregarded.

Mrs. Chrząszczewski explained that they were a closely-knit family and preferred to

dine at home with friends, rather than going out to restaurants. “Home food and atmosphere

are much better than restaurants, it just does not compare,” she declared self-assuredly.

Towards the end of the dinner a couple of friends of the hosts arrived for dessert. The hosts served cheesecake and walnut cake with coffee and liqueurs. It was an excellent and heavy meal. Soon an animated discussion started on the current financial crisis and Poland’s prospects in the world. Though Bill was first kindly asked for his opinions, soon the Poles started discussing matters among themselves, mostly in Polish, which he could not understand. He noticed that they became quite emotional, and all of them tried to talk at the same time, not listening but raising their voices to be better heard.

Around 10:00 pm. Bill mentioned the work facing him the next day, with his morning

presentation as the main event. He suggested it was time to go back to the hotel. It was

only then that he learned from Piotr about the postponement. “Oh, please do not worry, Bill,” said Piotr, “We may talk longer tonight, and you will get more time for rest in the morning.”

The party continued with good cheer. Jetlagged, Bill felt deeply tired when he finally got a ride to his hotel at midnight. His first day in Poland had been long, and not what he expected. He realized that he was visiting quite a different country.