

**Napoleon Dynamite Has Asperger's? Gosh, It's Called Cultural Competence, You Freakin' Idiots**

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Hey, can I borrow your journal for a sec?

Few things I consider myself an expert of, but the recent analysis of "Napoleon Dynamite" (1) is one of them. That is because I am Napoleon; not *the* Napoleon, but *a* Napoleon (there is more than one of us). I grew up on the borders of Preston, Idaho, and I dare declare I am the only Napoleon to have become a psychiatrist. The "aha" phenomenon I experienced when I saw the movie's protagonist throw that action figure in tow from the bus was more exhilarating than any previous demonstration psychotherapy session during my entire residency. As the opening scene unfolded, latent memories of my few awkward friends and me stealing one of our sisters' Barbie or Ken dolls and dragging, toppling, and dancing it over rocks and cow pies along the rural gravel roads was an exhilarating experience to my 10-year-old psyche. I was my chapter's Future Farmers of America president and proudly wore my jacket. In my day, our dairy tasting team was one of the best in the country, I dare boast. My way with girls . . . let's just say I did not have skills but desperately wanted any one of those listed by Napoleon.

So if the winners of wars write history books, could it be the winners of psychiatry write the diagnoses? The "cool" kids label the "geeks," but tell me again, who calls it a disorder? If you had treated me the way suggested in the article, I would have become *abnormal*. Proof: my mother, a daughter of the founders of Preston, does not *get* Napoleon. He's just a nice boy and the story is boring to her because it is about every day life!

I suggest you put down your DSM sometime and pick up the local newspaper, visit the local church or relic hall (there's a great one in Franklin), meet the family, read the local history, and learn about ancestors and traditions before you go calling someone's behavior an illness; because one day the Asperger's geeks may be labeling your lifestyle a disorder.

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**Reference**

1. Levin HW, Schlozman S: Napoleon Dynamite: Asperger's disorder or geek NOS? *Acad Psychiatry* 2006; 30:430-435

**CORRECTION:**

**Volume 31, Number 2, March/April 2007**

The address for correspondence in "Professional Development in Forensic Psychiatry: The Role of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law," by Philip J. Candilis and Joseph B. Layde, is the Department of Psychiatry, University of Massachusetts Medical School, 55 Lake Avenue North, Worcester, MA 01655.