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13 December 2024

### The Plague of Black Friday

Doesn't everyone love buying the most unnecessary items but at such a low price that you might as well get it? With the growing economy and technology, consumerism is getting out of hand. Consumerism is the social and economic idea that people should purchase goods even if it is not necessary for survival. One of the biggest events that promotes this idea is Black Friday. Black Friday is a day when consumers can buy almost every retail product at a reduced price from 25% - 30% (WXYZ Detroit). With Black Friday drastically reducing the prices of many products, American consumers display acts of greed, violence, entitlement, and overall inhumanity just to get things for the sake of saving money. Satires are a way to ridicule an idea in the form of a short story to emphasize the absurdity of that idea. The satire "Friday Black" by Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah, uses the satirical persona of an unnamed employee working at a mall during the Black Friday sales. The satire employs the use of disturbing and dark descriptions and imagery to emphasize and ridicule numerous of vices and follies that modern-day American consumers inhibit. Adjei-Brenyah employs satirical devices like reduction, reversal, line of consent, and hyperbole in order to call attention to the way extreme consumerism dehumanizes people.

To depict the inhumanity of American consumers, Adjei-Brenyah uses various examples of reduction and reversal to insinuate that they are like wild, savage beasts. The most prominent

strategy that Adjei-Brenyah employs is to reduce the consumers to ravenous wild beasts so that they truly lose their humanity due to their excessive greed and violence. During this satire, the narrator brutally fights back against the raging consumers while trying to appease their demands. One customer with “wild eyes and a bubble vest screams as he grabs [the narrator’s] left ankle. White foam drips from his mouth...He howls, ‘SleekPack. Son!’ while licking his injured hand” (Adjei-Brenyah 106). Immediately, the extreme measures that this satire describes can already be recognized. With white foaming seemingly dripping from the customer’s mouth, it is almost as if he has rabies, similar to a rabid animal. Similarly, the consumer licks his own hand like a dog would. This is a prime example of the use of reduction and reversal. Adjei-Brenyah degrades the dignity of the consumer by implementing animal-type actions to them. Simultaneously, Adjei-Brenyah switches the natural and stereotypical concepts of humans and animals. Humans are generally associated with being high-standing and highly intelligent beings, while wild animals are generally associated with being uncontrollable and violent beings. Later in the satire, the narrator sits at a table and sees a woman across from him. When he looks at her, “she hisses and shows her pointy white teeth” (Adjei-Brenyah 111). In this case, the woman displays similar acts to what a cat would do. In reality, animals would only act like this when their survival is at stake. Humans would also act desperate and intimidating in a similar way if their life was in danger, however, this satire brings it up in an extreme way and overly exaggerates what their actions are. This strategy is to advise modern-day consumers in a light-hearted way and make them reflect on their own actions. Due to the consumer’s overly excessive greed towards buying marked-down products, they tend to act like ravenous animals that ultimately dehumanize themselves.

Adjei-Brenyah uses techniques like lines of consent and hyperboles to thoroughly emphasize the violence customers enact towards others just to satisfy their consumeristic greed.

Similar to how Adjei-Brenyah uses techniques to depict the humans as ravenous beasts, he shows the violent actions they have towards each other for price-reduced products that convinces them that it is an absolute necessity for survival. The consumers are constantly fighting, beating, and harming people just to get what they want. The narrator sees “a woman in her thirties takes off her heel and smashes a child in the jaw with it just before he can grab the fleece. She inspects the tag, sees it is medium, then throws it down on top of the boy with a heel-size hole in his cheek” (Adjei-Brenyah 107). Adjei-Brenyah employs dark kinesthetic imagery to the point where it gets very disturbing. The woman creating a heel-sized hole in a child's cheek is an overly exaggerated hyperbole to what real-life consumers would do. The disturbing diction Adjei-Brenyah uses like “smashes” and “heel-sized hole” amplifies the exaggeration of the section. During Black Friday, consumers may kick or shove to obtain a product, but none would ever go to the length of creating a hole in a child's face, who does not even have the money to buy the fleece without his parents' financial support. On top of that, the woman then proceeds to drop the fleece on the boy because it was not the right size. Not only was that just pure violence, but it was also purposeless violence as well.

This section immediately crosses the line of consent, to the point where it gets disturbing and uncomfortable to read. When it gets to a disturbing point, it brings a call to attention to the reader and makes them self-reflect on their own actions. So, when the line of consent is crossed, the reader compares their own actions to the consumers' actions. Although their actions might not be as extreme as the ones noted in the satire, it may make them question their actions and realize how violent they may act on Black Friday. The point of the satire is to criticize certain people in a light-hearted way so they would not be offended and may actually follow the satire's implied advice. When the narrator was at the table during his break, he sees a woman who “pushes a woman who is lying face down in small puddle of red blood out of the chair. Then she

sits down...One of her ears looks like it is been mangled by teeth” (Adjei-Brenyah 111). In this case, the woman brutally pushes a corpse away just to get a seat at a table. She does this without caring for the dead body. Additionally, her ear was bitten and mangled by another customer, assumably fighting over a product that both of them wanted. Similarly, this scene contains a massively exaggerated hyperbole where real-life customers may injure one another on a lower scale, but this satire depicts them biting limbs off and showing no remorse for corpses. The unsettling kinesthetic imagery that Adjei-Brenyah employs in this quote continues to add to the dark and disturbing setting. The unsettling word choice that Adjei-Brenyah uses like “small puddle of red blood” and “mangled” amplifies the exaggeration of this section as well. This exaggerated violence destroys through the line of consent for the reader. The violence that both scenes depict results in the dehumanization of the customers, leading to them making inhumane actions.

Adjei-Brenyah employs satirical devices like reduction, reversal, line of consent, and hyperbole in order to call attention to the way extreme consumerism dehumanizes people. With the incorporation of reducing American consumers to savage beasts and employing techniques to emphasize the extreme violence consumerism partakes in, the satire hopes to advise modern-day consumers in a light-hearted way to re-think their actions towards others when faced with the greed from reduced prices on Black Friday.

#### Works Cited

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