

In the satirical piece “Friday Black” by Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah, the author uses reduction and anticlimax to critique the effects of rampant consumerism, classism, and unchecked capitalism. In order to portray the faults of overconsumption, Adjei-Brenyah reduces the average Black Friday consumer to something resembling an animal. He does this by constantly having the main character refer to the shoppers as “them,” almost as if they were another species. Another example of this can be seen in how the main character describes the shoppers, stating, “Most of the customers can’t speak in real words; the Friday Black has already taken most of their minds” (Adjei-Brenyah, 107). Again, their lack of speech makes the buyers seem less than human, and the way “Friday Black” is described almost as an infection or parasite furthers this point. The primal and animal-like depiction of the consumers shows the reader how different these people are from normal shoppers. The Black Friday deals are so enticing to them that they act inhuman. The reason these deals might seem so appealing is because of consumer’s socioeconomic status; Black Friday gives lower-income families that cannot usually afford certain items a chance to buy them. Their desperation, coupled with the knowledge that this is one of their only chances to make certain purchases, causes the average consumer to devolve into a violent brute.

Another way Adjei-Brenyah is able to critique our capitalist society is through the exploitation of the mall workers. They are forced to work for all of Black Friday, with the main character only making “\$8.50 an hour” (Adjei-Brenyah, 110). The only benefit the employees get from Black Friday is a small commission and a jacket of their choosing, with the commission only happening if the store does well that year. The whole event is made out to be a huge battle and accomplishment, but the only reward for both surviving and doing the best is a free jacket. This anticlimax shows how, even with hard work and dangerous conditions, you will never be properly compensated. The system that the main character is working under does not value him as someone who wants to make his mother happy; they only see him as a drone that sells jackets.