

Something to Do for Those Who Like Dopamine

David Whitmer

First Year Seminar 100-29: Writing the Self: The Personal Essay

Prof. Jacob Sider Jost

9 January 2023

David Whitmer
Imitation
FYS Seminar
Prof. Sider Jost
10/3/22

Something to Do for Those Who Like Dopamine

No one perhaps expresses vehement feelings about a cheap wallet in poor condition. But there are instances in which it can become supremely desirable to do so, instances in which we are set upon having a brand-new wallet, a purpose, an excuse for indulging in consumerism, as an escape from our daily troubles. But if we are to indulge, we must go all in; as the sports team go for the win instead of the tie, we must go to the behemoth of consumerism, the Mall; for this provides an absolute escape that other alternatives cannot offer.

The time for consumerism should be the holiday season; for the holiday season, the mall is at its most energetic; no need to worry about any dead spots in the mall that would ruin our experience. As we arrive in the parking lot with little daylight that remains, we become part of the herd that is escaping the real world. Our individuality at the mall extends only to the clothes on our back as that of a deer herd is its antlers. How we think we are so different from one another! And yet here we are, the herd, believing that indulging in consumerism will be so special and individualistic to us, and in a way, we are right to think this way. For in our rooms, we find stories of miscellaneous objects that have unique experiences for us. That speaker to play music, for instance, was bought with a friend; their ignorance to new technology was funny, embarrassing, and endearing, all wrapping into an idiosyncratic experience.

But all speculations about consumerism go away in our mind as soon as we enter. The liquor we drink to erase memory from our mind serves its purpose well, as our minds are great servants when external supplements are added. How pretty the mall is during the holiday season!

Here we find decorations floating from the ceiling glowing in the eyes of consumers as if sun rays were doing the same during a trip to the beach; all of which enhance our leisurely experiences; under the decorations, we find men and women with shopping bags who appear ambivalent about their current experience; one looks apathetic, as it appears to us, the high went away swiftly. Why do they not look happy? Do their serotonin levels not rise when they hear the Apple Pay sound? But, after all, the herd is taking a pill that is if playing a game of blackjack. The pill does not put us in a state of insobriety; it simply makes it difficult to see the negatives; it blocks out our troubles as if we are on a tube in a lazy river. Nonetheless, the negatives slip in as a glitch.

But here, we must stop at one consumer's come down and enjoy our own indulgence before the fun goes away! We stop at the front of a Bath and Body Works and make an excuse to waste even more precious time and indulge in other people's high — to escape even more as if we are trying to overdose on something that is not possible, as if we are an addict who goes all out for one final high before going sober. As we pick up a sample fragrance, we ask, "What is it like to be blind?"

He came in with an aide, either a relative or a specialist. The aide appeared normal and expressed a face, "Oh I am not embarrassed to be with him but please excuse us and have sympathy as he has been begging at home to go out and get high." He needed the aid for more than help but as a friend. We can only imagine how lonely it would be to indulge alone, for it would be going to Disney World alone — no one there to share the magic with. The smell of the fragrance is so profound it is as if a miracle from God struck the fragrance; the sounds of the receipt printing make us gleeful. But we need to leave the store as moderate doses are proper and make the hangover not egregious. Walking out of the store reminds us that we are in a herd and

have troubles; the high is still there but slowly coming down; what we think are glitches is actually reality; the reality is we wasted money but wanting to escape our new trouble, we search for that high again; we ask to go to other stores. But the aide reminds us we must return home and leave the mall.

We come down to a state of being that is moderately high and ask ourselves why “we are here” and answer to get as high as the blind man; to achieve this, we remind ourselves of our original excuse to get high — the wallet. We search amid the herd until we approach a retail kiosk out in the middle, close to nothing else; as if the kiosk came from Chernobyl, no one wants to be near it. But we see this as a good thing as we can get higher quicker, searching for the right wallet is not on our minds nor quality or price but the high of purchasing it; coming up to the counter, we pick the first wallet our eyes glance at, and as we are in the checkout process the onset of the high arrives and erupts after the clerk gives us our bag. The high is immensely powerful, having a great impact on us as if a giant asteroid hit earth; searching for what we were after, we head home to enjoy our wallet.

During the interval where we purchased our wallet, left the mall, and went to the car, the high wore off. As we drive off, we start questioning everything that happened. Is it good or bad to get high? Is it natural to want to get high? We start looking for solutions by looking at the receipt, seeing we are out twelve dollars. Not even noticing while high what kind of wallet we purchased, we look into the bag; it's purple, looks feminine — I am a guy -- that is not socially acceptable; yes, an excuse to go back and get high once more!

Postscript

In this essay, I imitated aspects of *Street Haunting* by Virginia Woolf. One aspect is using stream of consciousness to explicitly detail the thoughts and emotions of characters— to give a sense of realism. In my essay, the protagonist seeks a new wallet, but makes social observations that lead to disconnected thought tangents that convey a realistic stream of consciousness. I utilized complex sentences in the active voice with semicolons to attach independent clauses to subordinate clauses, creating an abrupt cadence and sense of realism and for artistic purposes as well. In addition, I use exclamation points for artistic purposes. The use of figurative language is critical to connect with my protagonist's actual feelings that end in unhappiness and reinforce the repeating cycle of indulging in consumerism.