

Short Paper 2: Consumerist Short Story

Length: 3-4 pages

Prompt

“Telemachus” and “Calypso,” the opening episodes of *Ulysses* that introduce its three main characters—Stephen Dedalus and Leopold and Molly Bloom—represent consumerism in 1904 Dublin in minute detail. Every little thing has a consumerist past, and the narrative goes to lengths to portray many of them. Stephen, Buck Mulligan, and Haines owe a local woman money for her milk deliveries. There is not simply milk in the Bloom household; it was delivered by Hanlon’s milkman. Bloom visits his local butcher, and the narrative minutely records his counting change and handing it over. By making these representational decisions, Joyce provides his readers a particular image of his setting.

In order to train you in the analysis of both literary style and consumerism, this assignment asks you to imitate the style of *Ulysses* by representing contemporary life. What sort of purchases do people make today? How do they make them? What sort of interactions do those purchases entail? What sort of consumer goods figure into everyday life and how are they used? You need not focus on yourself—although I think a closely autobiographical character would be easiest for this assignment—and you need not describe a morning routine. What you must do is record interactions with consumer goods and moments of consumption in a style that imitates “Telemachus” and “Calypso.”

Format

Form: You are to produce a brief short story in the style of the “Telemachus” and “Calypso.” Since this assignment is so brief, you need not produce a full beginning-middle-and-end story structure, but you do want to make the story segment interesting.

Style: Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1”-margins

Assessment

This assignment will be graded according to the following criteria.

	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
Style Imitation				
The student's story effectively echoes the style of the opening episodes of <i>Ulysses</i>				
Analysis				
The student's story reveals insights into contemporary consumerism, whether via relationships with consumer goods or other people via consumer goods				
Professionalism				
The student's story is not negatively impacted by a clear lack of care or attention to detail				