

Assignments:

1. **Outline** the development and key characteristics of *the feed*.
(comprehension: **20 %**)
2. **Analyze** how Titus and Violet's use of language reflects their different perception of *the feed*.
(analysis: **40 %**)
3. Choose one of the following tasks:
(evaluation: **40 %**)

3.1. **Comment** on the following quote from the excerpt. Refer to the given text and your coursework.

"Because of the feed, we're raising a nation of idiots." (l. 69)

OR

3.2. **Write** Titus' **diary entry** in which he **reflects on** Violet's indirect accusation towards him being "a self-centered, ignorant idiot" (ll. 71 f.).

Source:

Anderson, M.T. (2002). *Feed*. Somerville: Candlewick Press. Chapters *Missing the Feed & The Dimples of Delegacy* p.26-33, abridged.

Annotations:

- | | | |
|--------|---------|---|
| l. 16: | pouty | used to describe lips that are pushed forward, especially because someone is intentionally doing this in order to look more sexually attractive |
| l. 16: | brag | here: awesome/cool |
| l. 26: | School™ | trademark; privatization of school |

M.T. Anderson:

Feed (2002) (excerpt)

Anderson's novel takes place in a far-off future where microchips are implanted in babies' brains after birth. This device, the feed, allows them direct access to the internet through their minds and provides users with a constant stream of information, entertainment, and personalized promotions for products to consume.

In the following excerpt, Titus, the main character, thinks about the feed. Later on he recalls a conversation he had with Violet, a girl he knows from a weekend trip.

I don't know when they first had feeds. Like maybe, fifty years ago. Before that, they had to use their hands and their eyes. Computers were all outside the body. They carried them around outside of them, in their hands, like if you carried your lungs in a briefcase and opened it to breathe.

- 5 People were really excited when they first came out with feeds. It was all da da da, this big educational thing, da da da, your child will have the advantage, encyclopedias at their fingertips, etc. That's one of the great things about the feed — that you can be supersmart without ever working. You can look things up automatically, like science and history, like if you want to know which battles of the
10 Civil War George Washington fought in and shit.

- [But] it's more now, it's not so much about the educational stuff anymore but more regarding the fact that everything that goes on, goes on on the feed. All of the feedcasts and the instant news, that's on there, so there's all the entertainment I was missing without a feed, like the girls were all missing their favorite feedcast, this show
15 called Oh? Wow! Thing!, which has all these kids like us who do stuff but get all pouty, which is what the girls go crazy for, the poutiness. But the braggest thing about the feed now is that it knows everything you want and hope for, sometimes before you even know what those things are. It can tell you how to get them, and help you make buying decisions that are hard. Everything we think and feel is taken
20 in by the corporations mainly by data ones like Feedlink and OnFeed and American Feedware, and they make a special profile, one that's keyed just to you, and then they give it to their branch companies, or other companies buy them, and they can get to know what it is we need, so all you have to do is want something and there's a chance it will be yours. [...]

25 Plus, [these big corporations] keep like everyone in the world employed, so it's not like we could do without them. [...] Now that School™ is [also] run by the corporations, it's pretty brag, because it teaches us how the world can be used, like mainly how to use our feeds. [...]

And I sat there with my palms pressed into my forehead, thinking about Violet, being
30 home-schooled. I would think about some conversation we were having. Like she was always reading things about how everything was dying and there was less air and everything was getting toxic. She told me about how things were getting really bad with some things in South America, but she couldn't really tell exactly how bad, because the news had been asked to be a little more positive. [...]

35 So one time I said to her that she should stop reading it, because it was just depressing, so she was like, But I want to know what's really going on, so I was like, Then you should do something about it. It's a free country. You should do something. She was like, Nothing's ever going to happen in a two-party system, nothing's ever going to change, both parties are in the pocket of the big corporations. So I was like,
40 You got to believe in the people, it's a democracy, we can change things. She was like, It's not a democracy. [...]

When she said things like It's not a democracy, suddenly I couldn't stand to be having this whole conversation [...] and I got sarcastic, so I was like, No, sure, it's all fascist, isn't it? We're all fascists?

45 Then she was like, really gently, No, please, I'm not trying to be an asshole. It's not a democracy.

I was like, Then what is it?

A republic. It's a republic.

Why?

50 Because we elect people to vote for us. That's my point.

So why is it like that?

Because if it was a democracy, everybody would have to decide about everything.

I thought about that. We could have everybody vote. From the feeds. Instantaneous. Then it would be a democracy.

55 Except, she said, only about seventy-three percent of Americans have feeds.

Oh, I said. Yeah. And so I felt stupid. There's that many who don't?

Then she told me, I didn't use to have a feed.

I was like, What do you mean?

60 She was quiet like she didn't want to chat. Then she went, We didn't have enough money. When I was little. And my dad and mom didn't want me to have one.

Holy shit.

I got it when I was seven.

I'm sorry, I said.

For what?

65 For not knowing. You know, that so many people don't have them.

No one with feeds thinks about it, she said. When you have the feed all your life, you're brought up to not think about things. Like them never telling you that it's a republic and not a democracy. It's something that makes me angry, what people don't know about these days. Because of the feed, we're raising a nation of idiots.

70 Ignorant, self-centered idiots.

Suddenly, she realized what she had said, that she'd just called me a self-centered, ignorant idiot. She stopped [...] and she put her hand on my arm, which was the worst, because it was the consolation prize.

(986 words)