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**CT800: Week 8 Assignments**

**Four Levels of Close Reading “Overpopulation is bad but Overconsumption is worse”**

First Level: Paraphrasing

The author is trying to show that we are not aware of a real threat to the modern world which is overconsumption (not as we commonly believe overpopulation).

Second Level:

1. Explicating

1. The author is convincing that overconsuming people from developed countries are a 16 times bigger threat than poor people from developing countries.

2. In other words, he is proving that our strive for more goods ist he main cause of environmental destruction.

3. For example, we produce more goods than we can use, we buy more than we need (Black Friday, Cyber Monday)

4. Analogy: like being addicted to alcohol or sugar – you gradually need more and more to „feel good“, to get your satisfaction.

2. Explicating

1. The author states that consumption has become a religion for many people.

2. In other words, people treat shopping, buying new goods as some kind of a ritual, sometimes even „family time“.

3. For example, we go shopping, even when we do not need anything, very often window shopping, a lot of people visit shopping malls regularlya family pastime

4. Analogy: it’s like compulsive eating – you go and look into your fridge even when you’re not hungry.

3. Explicating

1. The author states that consumption results in enormous social costs of life.

2. In other words, consumption influences our social and family life. People care more about goods and new gadgets than about relations with other people. They become distant, less interested.

3. For example, parents spending time with their children are constantly checking their mobile, scrolling IG or FB, not paying attention, not showing care to their children.

4. Analogy: it’s like being on a fast food diet – you eat, but you do not nourish your organism.

Third level: Analyzing

- Goal: the author wants to draw our attention to the real threat to the modern world - excessive consumption and explains its sources.

- Points of view: the author presents only his point of view; he doesn’t incorporate other perspectives.

- Assumptions: consumerism will not make you happy, excessive consumption is worse than overpopulation, the US is most to blame for excessive consumption, human self-sufficiency is a chance to improve the situation

- Implications: if we start consuming less, there is a chance for the earth to get better and for us to be happier.

- Information: Alan Durning (Worldwatch Institute), Victor Lebov, the Chair of US Council of Economic Advisors, Psychologist “Consumption doesn’t lead to happiness”

- Inferences: the solution is self-sufficient and conscious communities of people.

- Concepts: consumerism, consumption does not lead to happiness, the structure of the American economy is based on increasing consumerism, earth's resources are not unlimited

- Question: Is it possible for us to change our modern habits, consumer lifestyle? Will it help the planet? Will it make us happier?

Fourth Level: Evaluating

* - Clarity: each paragraph seems to be clear and logical. However, after reading the whole text I got the feeling that I lost the clarity of author’s goal.
* - Accuracy: I cannot find any data, facts supporting the ideas presented, there are some numbers, but with no reference. I feel a lot of author’s emotions while reading which makes me believe that what he presents are mostly opinions.
* - Precision: too much pseudo-data to treat it as precise; jumping from one topic (example) to another without going deeper.
* - Relevance: the author provides relevant, related to the topic of the entire article information.
* - Depth: I can see a lot of thesis, arguments for author’s opinion, but none of them is presented in detail, no complexity is shown.
* - Breadth: The author shows virtually no other points of view, no other data, no other theses that would explain excessive consumption and indicate other threats to the earth and the world
* - Consistency: the text is coherent and consistently presents the image of the world indicated in the title
* - Significance: I find the topic of this article significant. However, this simplified and chaotic way of presenting it might loose a lot of its importance.
* - Fairness: It doesn’t seem fair to me – only one perspective, superficial arguments, strong, emotional opinion.