

First Day Writing Sample 355:101 Expository Writing Fall 2004

Please provide the following information. If there is any question about your placement, I will need to contact you so that you can be moved to the appropriate level right away.

Name: _____ Local Telephone #: _____

SS#: _____ Email Address: _____

In asking you to produce a first-day writing sample, I am interested in getting an initial sense of your strengths and weaknesses as a reader and a writer. I am also interested in checking to make certain that you have been correctly placed in Expos. 101. For these reasons it is **crucial that you do your best work on this writing sample**. Use all of the time allowed and produce your best version of what you understand an essay to be. If you finish early, check your spelling, grammar, and syntax.

Please read these passages and answer the question on the following page:

In his essay “Global Realization,” investigative journalist Eric Schlosser tells how globalization is changing many places around the world. Though he focuses on McDonald’s role in that process, he gives a number of examples, including these from two towns in Germany, Dachau and Plauen, which he visited while writing the essay:

In 1997, protests were staged against the opening of a McDonald’s [in Dachau] so close to a concentration camp where gypsies, Jews, homosexuals, and political opponents of the Nazis were imprisoned, where Luftwaffe scientists performed medical experiments on inmates and roughly 30,000 people died. The McDonald’s corporation has denied that it was trying to profit from the Holocaust and said the restaurant was at least a mile from the camp. After the curator of the Dachau Museum complained that McDonald’s was distributing thousands of leaflets among tourists in the camp’s parking lot, the company halted the practice. “Welcome to Dachau,” said the leaflets, “and welcome to McDonald’s.”

The McDonald’s at Dachau is one-third of a mile from the entrance to the concentration camp. The day I went there, the restaurant was staging a “Western Big Mac” promotion. It was decorated in a Wild West theme, with paper place mats featuring a wanted poster of “Butch Essidie.” The restaurant was full of mothers and small children. Teenagers dressed in Nikes, Levis, and Tommy Hilfiger T-shirt sat in groups and smoked cigarettes. Turkish immigrants worked in the kitchen, seventies disco music played, and the red paper cups on everyone’s tray said “Always Coca-Cola.” This McDonald’s was in Dachau, but it could have been anywhere – anywhere in the United States, anywhere in the world. Millions of other people at that very moment were standing at the same counter, ordering the same food from the same menu, food that tasted everywhere the same (532).

PLEASE SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PAGE →

Around the time that Plauen got its McDonald's in 1990, a new nightclub opened in a red brick building on the edge of town. 'The Ranch' has an American flag and a Confederate flag hanging out front. Inside there's a long bar, and the walls are decorated with old-fashioned farm implements, saddles, bridles, and wagon wheels. Frieder Stephan, the owner of The Ranch, was inspired by photographs of the American West, but gathered all the items on the walls from nearby farms. The place looks like a bar in Cripple Creek, circa 1895. ... Plauen now has a number of small westernwear shops like Thommy's that sell imported cowboy boots, cowboy posters, fancy belt buckles, work shirts with snaps, and Wrangler jeans. While teenagers in Colorado Springs today could not care less about cowboys, kids in Plauen are sporting bolo ties and cowboy hats.

Every Wednesday night, a few hundred people gather at The Ranch for line dancing. Members of Plauen's American Car Club pull up in their big Ford and Chevy trucks. Others come from miles away, dressed in their western best, ready to dance. Most of them are working class, and many are unemployed. Their ages range from seven years old to seventy. If somebody doesn't know how to line-dance, a young woman named Petra gives lessons. People wear their souvenir T-shirts from Utah. They smoke Marlboros and drink beer. They listen to Willie Nelson, Garth Brooks, Johnny Cash – and they dance, kicking up their boots, twirling their partners, waving their cowboy hats in the air. And for a few hours the spirit of the American West fills this funky bar deep in the heart of Saxony, in a town that has seen too much history, and the old dream lives on, the dream of freedom without limits, self-reliance, and a wide-open frontier (547-548).

Question for Writing:

How is the example of McDonald's in Dachau related to the example of The Ranch in Plauen? What is Schlosser's implicit critique of the way globalization affects people in these two German towns? What is your opinion of the effects of globalization that Schlosser describes? Be sure to cite evidence from the passages in your essay.