Composition 1B **Diagnostic In-class Essay** Fall 2011

Directions: The goal with this kind of essay is to **summarize and respond to the ideas of two different writers**, relating them to each other, and then **giving your own judgment** on the subject in question.

Audience/forum: Write as if this would be published in **The Spartan Daily**.

\* You must summarize and respond to TWO works, either both of the passages below or one of them and “Why You Can’t Sit Down to Eat Without Making a Statement.”

\* Your own ideas, (a thesis with reasons and support) should fill at least half of the space. \* In developing your own ideas, draw on your own experience, observations, & reading.

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**“You Should Know the Origins of What You Buy” By** [**Sarah Kyo**](http://www.spartandaily.com/search?q=%22Sarah%20Kyo%22)11/13/08 ***The Spartan Daily***

You may learn a thing or two about this [where goods we buy are made] and more from exhibits displayed on the first floor of Clark Hall today at 10:30 a.m. Students from a couple sections of the anthropology class Emerging Global Cultures will focus on different commodities, such as coffee, PlayStation and shoes, and explain the journey they go through to become the products we know and love to consume, use up and buy some more of. More important, the exhibits should show issues associated with the production and/or consumption of these commodities.

Take something that many people worldwide do know and love - chocolate - as an example. Actually, that's what my group and I are presenting at our exhibit. Chocolate is a cultural thing. In the United States, it is prominently used as an expression of romance for Valentine's Day and a treat for ghouls and goblins on Halloween.

[. . . .] Things aren't all rosy and sweet when it comes to this confection, though. Chocolate does have its dark side, and it has nothing to do with how concentrated it is. Before chocolate ends up on grocery store shelves [. . . ], it originates from beans in the pods of cocoa trees found in tropical areas along the equator.

The western part of Africa, including Ghana and the Ivory Coast, produces a large percentage of the world's cocoa beans. Did you know that according to Reuters, farmers from the Ivory Coast are being paid less than a dollar for each kilogram (roughly over two pounds) of beans they grow? Did you know that some farms that grow cocoa use child slaves who are trafficked from other countries and end up working all day under the sun in poor conditions? According to a 2006 *Forbes* article, activists have accused well-known corporations such as Nestle of using cocoa from such places that use slaves.

While not all of us can manage to travel around like Professor Rivoli, [author of the book *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy: An Economist Examines the Markers, Power and Politics of World Trade*], it is important to be aware and educated of where things come from and the conditions in which the product came about. It can be easy to forget to consider and be appreciative of the amount of time, effort and work that goes into what we take for granted.

# 2) This is from the company Web site for Divine Chocolate, on the “about us” page

# The Divine Story The story starts in 1879 when Tetteh Quarshie first brought cocoa to Ghana from Equatorial Guinea. Since then, Ghanaian cocoa has developed a global reputation for its quality and its taste. Today it is one of the country’s main exports. Ghana is the second largest exporter of cocoa in the world. Most of the cocoa is grown by small-scale family farmers on 4-5 acres of land. Cocoa farming is a precarious business. The trees are vulnerable to various diseases and pests and although chocolate is one of the world’s favorite treats, the cocoa price often dips below the level at which it pays enough for cocoa small-scale farmers to survive.

In the early 1990's, the opportunity [arose] to organize farmers in an industry where their voices were not being heard and set up a licensed buying company that would be run by farmers and for their benefit. These farmers pooled resources to set up Kuapa Kokoo, a farmers' co-op, which would trade its own cocoa, and thus manage the selling process more efficiently than the government cocoa agents. Kuapa Kokoo - which means good cocoa growers - has a mission to empower farmers in their efforts to gain a dignified livelihood, to increase women's participation in all of Kuapa's activities, and to develop environmentally friendly cultivation of cocoa.

Kuapa Kokoo quickly developed a reputation for being fair and honest. In Ghana, [. . .] control of the scale is tremendously important. A cocoa farmer can easily be robbed by unscrupulous clerks that rigged the scales to cheat farmers out of the full value of their crop. Kuapa Kokoo put power over the scales in the hands of farmers by making sure that each village had its own scale and its own elected clerk or village recorder. [. . . .] And with investment from The Body Shop and Twin Trading, and support from Comic Relief and Christian Aid, Divine Chocolate was born.

[. . . .] The success of Divine means that farmers have a secure source of Fair Trade income that continues to grow year on year. Kuapa Kokoo has invested its Fair Trade income in building schools, sinking wells for clean drinking water to villages, providing mobile medical clinics for farmers in remote growing regions, and fostering women’s income generation projects to help women earn additional income for their families when the cocoa season is over. The farmers' ownership stake in Divine Chocolate means that Kuapa Kokoo has a meaningful input into decisions about how Divine is produced and sold. In addition, Kuapa Kokoo receives a share in the profits from their ownership shares and in 2007 celebrated the first distribution of dividends from Divine in the UK. To further its mission and further increase benefits for cocoa farmers, Divine Chocolate launched a US company to expand into $13 billion American market. In 2006, Divine Chocolate Inc opened in Washington DC to bring fantastic Fair Trade chocolate to US consumers. The farmers of Kuapa Kokoo own one-third of Divine Chocolate in the US.

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Note: This essay led into a recipe page. The specific forum was a regular food column published as part of the Sunday magazine that comes with the NY Times newspaper.

**“Home on the Range” By Molly O'Neill** 10/18/92

Riding the Montana range with George Kahrl, one of the rising generation of organic-beef growers, I am conscious of the land, the way it rolls flat and dry and lonesome as an abandoned river bottom.

The plains inch up to foothills that are occasionally seamed by brush-lined creeks and straggly fences. But these demarcations, along with our two horses and a grazing herd of 145 cows (each with a calf), are only passing through, like the wind or a spatter of rain. I adjust my world view accordingly. And for a moment I understand the taste for a big, juicy steak.

I know that beef has an average of 22 percent fat, and is cited by cardiac specialists as a leading dietary contributor to heart disease. I know it is embarrassingly decadent to eat beef in a world where famine and hunger are still pervasive. Economists estimate that the water and acreage required to raise beef for one person could feed up to 20 people if it were used to raise grains.

I know that a rampant appetite for beef has powered the destruction of rain forests, the erosion of topsoil, the pollution of table water. I know that slabs of beef have gone the way of the Old West. Even knowing all this, a two-hour trot across Kahrl's ranch, which sprawls over 5,000 acres 35 miles west of Bozeman, Mont., leaves me crazed for red meat.

What can explain this primal and, for now, at least, politically incorrect and socially suspect appetite? Do lungs full of fresh air trigger a craving for the trophy of a hunt?

[. . . .]

"The land is bigger than me, older than me; it's going to be around a lot longer than me," said Kahrl, who chose to be a cowboy when he and his wife, Kathleen Crawford, bought the Sarah Faith Ranch in 1987. One reason he ranches, rather than farms, is that soil erosion in this type of landscape can be controlled through prudent grazing. Generally, he grazes a given 15-to-20-acre patch for one week, then he moves his herd and allows the grazed land to rest for at least 90 days. Due to careful husbandry, 50 percent of his herd never requires antibiotics and can therefore be sold as organic. "It's healthier for the land, healthier for the animals, healthy for people," he says.

By an odd twist, this style of ranching places Kahrl, and a few dozen other organic beef ranchers across America, back on a frontier. They are preservationists, but most preservationists scorn their methods. They are health-minded, but most health advocates disdain their product. They are cattle ranchers but their slow, costly methods threaten conventional beef producers. They are modern cowboys. [The meat they produce, with its] clean, rich, distinct flavor, delivers hints of lonesome cowboys and wide-open plains. It's a balm to wind-chapped cheeks and achy, well-exercised limbs. Sure, the craving is archaic. But, for me, it is irrepressible.

Circle the wagons, let's eat.

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1. **From *Javatrekker: Dispatches from the World of Fair Trade Coffee* by Dean Cycon, founder & owner of Dean’s Beans Organic Coffee**

When you sit back with a good cup of coffee you are engulfed in the aroma, the taste, the acidity, and body of the brew. You take in all the dimensions of the cup—yet this is only the surface. Swirling beneath are worlds within worlds of culture, custom, ecology, and politics. All of the major issues of the 21st century—globalization, immigration, women’s rights, pollution, indigenous rights, and self-determination—are being played out through this cup of coffee in villages and remote areas around the world. It is also complex, with several layers of middlemen removing the 28 million growers in 50 distant countries far from the ultimate consumer, far from your cup. [. . . .]

The price paid to coffee farmers has little to do with the cost of growing and processing the crop. Nor does the price include a reasonable profit for the farmers to maintain to improve their lives. Rather, coffee prices are dictated largely by the forecasts of financial speculators, banks, and multinational corporations in New York and London. One month a farmer may receive a reasonable reward for his or her labors, and the very next month the price can plummet. Nothing has changed at the farm level, so the farmer shakes his head and carries on. During the first five years of the new millennium coffee prices were often lower than the cost of production, driving hundreds of thousands of coffee families off their lands and into crowded cities or across borders. Sometimes this forced exodus ended in death, with desperate migrant farmers falling off trains in Mexico or abandoned in locked vans in the Texas heat.

Well-intended private initiatives and international efforts to provide an ethical alternative to the current pricing system (Fair Trade, for example) have kept thousands of farmers on their lands but, while growing, represent only the smallest fraction of world coffee commerce.

1. **“You Should Know the Origins of What You Buy” By** [**Sarah Kyo**](http://www.spartandaily.com/search?q=%22Sarah%20Kyo%22) **Published: Thursday, November 13, 2008 in *The Spartan Daily***

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