



Erdkinder:

Living and maintaining
life

By Priscilla
Alderman

July 2012

Human Dependence on Land to secure food and fiber



- “I begin with the proposition that eating is an agricultural act. Eating ends the annual drama of the food economy that begins with planting and birth. Most eaters, however, are no longer aware that this is true.” (Berry 145)

Journal, 7/10/12

“I started to really enjoy myself when I began to dig up potatoes. Putting in the physical effort to wriggle the pitchfork tines in the soil was worth it when the result was a little explosion of hidden red ‘Easter Eggs’.”

A Greater connection to the cycles of nature



- “When my children help me dig and hoe the garden, plant corn and beans, later on pick them, and later still preserve the harvest’s end, compost our scraps, and then turn that compost back into the garden plot the following spring, they are learning important skills for living and maintaining life.” (Kingsolver 130)

Reflection

I loved visiting the Amish Farm and the Beekeeper. I had never locked eyes with a calf or been surrounded by a cloud of bees before. I’ve never been much of a wilderness girl, but I was awed by their interconnectedness with one another and with their environments.

Role of humans in animal husbandry



- “At Polyface Farm, the animals and crops seem to move in circles like some sort of complicated dance. Each plant and animal plays its part and Joel Salatin is the choreographer. The pastures are the stage and the main action of the dance is to rotate the animals through the pastures.” (Pollan 147)

Reflection:

All of the beekeepers I met were so knowledgeable and passionate. They held the hives—full of honey and young bees—with such care. They spoke with evident pride about their partnerships with these astonishing little communities.

Ethics and issues of securing food



- “It would not do for the consumer to know that the hamburger she is eating came from a steer who spent much of his life standing deep in his own excrement in a feedlot, helping to pollute the local streams, or that the calf that yielded the veal cutlet on her plate spent its life in a box in which it did not have room to turn around.” (Berry 148)

Journal, 7/10/12

“Adam’s chicken slaughter was a respectful process. It is amazing that, in a matter of minutes, a living thing is killed, cleaned and made to look like the food we’re used to. Before the chickens were killed, I went up to pet them and to feel all the movement inside---the heart whirring, the lungs rumbling. Moments later, that complex inner system was scraped out onto the board before us.”

Impact of individual choice on environment



- “Food is one part of our lives we can still control. We can still decide, every day, what we’re going to put into our bodies, what sort of food chain we want to be part of. We can vote with our forks.” (Pollan 190)

Reflection:

It was difficult to imagine that my own individual purchases and wastes can actually have an effect on this world.

However, our readings explored so many aspects of food production that I had never thought much about. I intend to reflect more about these vital issues; it's the ones like me who most need to change.

Resource use and abuse



- “If you come home with bananas from Ecuador, tomatoes from Holland, cheese from France, and artichokes from California, you have guzzled some serious gas. This...is a stunning energy boondoggle: Transporting 5 calories’ worth strawberry from California to New York costs 435 calories of fossil fuel.” (Kingsolver 114)

Journal, 7/10/12

“Supersizes give us the message that ‘one serving’ can not only be 12 ounces, but also 64 ounces. We’re eating calories that we don’t need. These servings bring us to the stuffed level and give us more food and energy than our bodies can use.”

Service work



- “I want to be with people who submerge/in the task, who go into the fields to harvest/ and work in a row and pass the bags along,/ who stand in line and haul their places,/who move in a common rhythm/ when the food must come in or the fire be put out.” from “To Be of Use” by Marge Piercy

Journal, 7/10/12

“I felt useful and accomplished as I helped with watering Clark’s garden, wrapping wire on the fence bars, and building the parts of the beehives.”

leadership



Reflection:

I wanted to try carpentry precisely because I had such little experience with it. Kate was a great leader in this work crew. She had much experience in this area, but she didn't dominate the project at all. She guided us in the right direction, but made sure that we each had a chance to try using each power tools. I felt pretty tough using the electric drill and the chop box!

- "I could only ever hope to dent the salacious appetites of my homeland and make us a more perfect union by living inside this amazing beast (America), poking at its belly from the inside with my one little life and the small, pointed sword of my pen." (Kingsolver 113)

Community building



Reflection:

I felt much closer and more connected to our group after this experience. I got to talk at length with so many people that I hadn't gotten the chance to speak to before. Everyone seemed so open to me and to one another.

- “What brought them all together at Polyface Farm? Getting their food from Polyface lets them feel connected to their food. And of course, they might just enjoy spending a little time on a farm, chatting on the porch.” (Pollan 184)

“The risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.”
from “risk” by Anais Nin

