

Lessons from Unit 3 Application Exercises

- A. The notion of nature as sacred is rooted in specific practices:
- farming, whether pre-industrial, industrial or sustainable (John Burroughs, William Salatin, David & Elsie vs. George Naylor & Blake Hurst)
 - harvesting and cooking (Kingsolver, Farmer's Diner, "Ricki the Cheese Queen")
- B. Engagement in sustainable growing, gathering and preparation of food, which nurtures local food cultures, is heightened by
- thinking of nature as a complex, dynamic, mysterious and endlessly fascinating **web of relationships**.
 - the idea that human beings share the **responsibility for** maintaining the **balance** of forces in that web.

Transition: Reflection Influencing Modern Practice (for opening discussion)

- * What kinds of thoughts & feelings about the sacred occurred in connection with your local meal, if any?
- * What *kind* of thoughts & feelings about the sacred, if any, has influenced people throughout history to gather, grow and eat their food sustainably?
- * What kind of thoughts & feelings about the sacred influence sustainable farming practices today?

Content Objectives for Unit 4:
Food, Farming & Notions of the Sacred in Contemporary Life

By the end of this unit you should be able to describe, for an interested peer unfamiliar with these topics:

1. notions of the sacred developed alongside modern small-scale, nature-oriented farming practices which support local food cultures.
2. thoughts & feelings about the sacred that enhance the yearly cycle of gathering & preparing locally grown food in modern times.
3. the extent to which and ways that modern thoughts & feelings about the sacred heighten engagement in such farming & food gathering.

& enjoy your **Thanksgiving** & get ready for finals!

OVERVIEW OF READINGS

Primary Sources

- "Pastoral: Grass" (TOD, 123-40, 151-69, 169-84, 185-202, 208-25, 226-73)
 - "Waiting for Asparagus" through "Life in a Red State"
(AVM, 23-58, 86-107, 173-211, 219-354)

IMPORTANT: pages & terms in blue are NOT required for the TRA!

--> **for terms marked with * consult these EB articles:**

“dimensions of the sacred” & “worship of animals
+ skim/review entire article on “origins of agriculture”
(use links in on-line course schedule)

reviewing basic terminology for the academic study of religion
“Essential Elements of Religious Life (on-line syllabus)

(a) What precise language can be used to describe the unseen things about which religious people dynamically reflect and come to trust? (sections III & IV)

unstated beliefs trust

awareness faith

powers forces worlds

verbal vs. symbolic depictions

(b) What analogies help picture the relationship between reflection, practice, community? (section V)

dimensions layers

Michael Pollan's Study of Industrial Organic vs. Small-Scale Farming
(TOD, 123-40, 151-69, 169-84, 185-202, 208-25, 226-73)

Places & Institutions

Whole Foods vs. Polyface Farm

People:

Joel Salatin

Allan Nation

Gene Kahn

Key Ideas

supermarket pastoral

holon

Michael Pollan's Study of Industrial Organic vs. Small-Scale Farming
(TOD, 123-40, 151-69, 169-84, 185-202, 208-25, 226-73)

(a) what did Pollan discover about the methods & the ecological impact of what he calls "Big Organic"? (p.130-40, 151-69, 169-84)

Greenways	Petaluma Poultry	Earthbound Farm	Cal-Organic
polyphenols	omega-3	asparagus	blackberries
	fossil fuels	chicken	

(b) what relationships exist between grass & animals on Salatin's farm? (p.123-29, 85-225)

Daniel & William Salatin	electric fences	Eggmobile	efficiency
evisceration	USDA regulation	killing cone	

(c) what different forms of community do Salatin's food production practices create? (p.202-7, 226-73)

grace	ministry	redemption	Luther
Art Salatin	Bev Eggleston	metropolitan buying club	
Mark & Liz	Brillat Savarin	brining	corn
		rocket	chicken

Kingsolver's Year of Harvesting & Preparing Local Food in Virginia
(AVM, 23-58, 86-107, 173-**211**, **219-354**)

(a) challenges & joys of getting started (p.23-58, 86-107)

Lily Camille Stephen hollow farmer's market
Asparagus rhubarb heirloom genetic modification (GM) silverbeet cherries
baby chicks denial/restraint birthday party gratitude

(b) harvest, preparation & preservation (p.173-211, **219-271**)

zucchini weeds therapy meditation tomato canning
conservative farm vs. town Red State Appalachian Harvest
nature* [sacred*] [calendar*] [heroic activity*]
meat eating vs. vegetarian "harvesting" Kristy Zahnke
Abby & Eli chicken turkey Jimmy Carter Mr. Doodle

(c) celebration, winter & new life (p.**277-352**)

Queensland Blue potatoes hens Thanksgiving Creation Dia de los Muertos
Bourbon Reds frozen-foods Hungry Month
turkey sex purification ritual peeping

passages to look for in these primary sources—for TRA #4

"Suddenly we arrived at a patch of woodland that looked more like a savanna than a forest: The trees had been thinned, and all around them grew thick grasses. This was one of the pig paddocks...carved out of the woods with the help of the pigs themselves. 'All we do to make a new pig paddock is fence off a quarter acre of forest, thin out the sapplings to let in some light, and then let the pigs do their thing.' Their thing includes eating down the brush and rooting around in the stony ground, disturbing the soil in a way that induces the grass seed already present to germinate. Within several weeks, a lush stand of wild rye and fox tail emerges among the trees, and a savanna is born."

"This is what my friends brought: dug from their own backyards, a division of a fifty year old peony, irises, a wisteria vine, spicy sweetshrub, beebalm, hostas, datura, lilies, and a flowering vine whose name none of us knows. My parents brought an Aristocrat pear, a variety bred by an old friend from our hometown. A geographer friend brought Portuguese collards, another indulged my fondness for red hot chili peppers. Rosemary and sage, blueberry and raspberry, fountain grass, blue sweetgrass, sunshine-colored roses, blue-and-white columbines, scarlet poppies, butterfly bush, and a 'Sunset' echinacea--the color scheme of my garden is 'Crayola.' Our neighbor, to whom we'd taken the tomato plant, dug some divisions of her prettiest lemon lilies."

"That conventional supply chain begins with the clever machine...developed to harvest baby greens: a car-size lettuce-shaving machine that moves down the rows, cutting the baby greens at a precise point just above the crown. Spidery arms extended in front of the machine gently rake through the bed in advance of the blade, scaring off any mice that might find their way into the salad. A fan blows the cut leaves over a screen to shake out any pebbles or soil, after which a belt conveys the greens into white plastic totes that workers stack on pallets on a wagon trailing alongside."

"It is also noiseless in the garden: phoneless, meditative, and beautiful. AT the end of one of my more ragged afternoons of urgent faxes from magazine editors or translators, copy that must be turned around on a dime, incomprehensible contract questions, and baffling requests from the IRS that are all routine parts of my day job, I relish the short commute to my second shift. Nothing is more therapeutic than to walk up there and disappear into the yellow-green smell of the tomato rows for an hour to address the concerns of quieter, more manageable colleagues. Holding the soft, viny limbs as tender as babies wrists, I train them to their trellises, tidy the mulch at their feet, inhaled the oxygen of their thanks."